



KEM hospital to start hand transplants

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Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC's) KEM hospital will soon become the first hospital in the state to conduct hand transplants. An inspection committee from the state health services department has already conducted a round of the hospital for the same.

India's first hand transplant programme was conducted in Kerala last year.

The move will signal a ray of hope for those people who have lost their hands in an accident. Hand transplantation procedures are similar to the process of transplanting any other organ. Even in this case, a brain-dead donor is necessary, whose hand is transplanted to a recipient. Moreover, the donor and the recipient's blood needs to match.

(AIMS) successfully conducted India's first hand transplant last year. World over, around 110 cases of cadaver hand transplants have been documented so far, with less than 3% rejections.

In KEM hospital, this transplant procedure will be performed by the doctors from the plastic surgery department. Dr Vinita Puri, head, department of plastic, reconstructive surgery and burns at the hospital, said, "We anyway conduct micro-surgery and the reconstruction of body defects in the case of burns, etc. Surgically speaking, we have already conducted many related micro-surgeries. An inspection has already been conducted and we hope we will get permission to start the programme soon."

She added: "This surgical procedure has a good success rate abroad. An important thing to keep in mind is that after this procedure, the patient needs to be put on immunosuppressant drugs, which are also called anti-rejection drugs."

Hand transplants are followed by postoperative rehabilitation courses conducted by physiotherapists and occupational therapists. In about one year of a transplant, the limb becomes 90% normal, but some small muscles might not become totally functional again or total blood circulation might not be normal. But with regular rehabilitation, in course of time, the transplanted limb feels normal, like a natural limb.

Dr Sujata Patwardhan, secretary, Zonal Transplantation Co-ordination Committee, said: "KEM's plastic surgery department has already undergone inspection and the programme will soon be started there. It will definitely help people. We need to create awareness among the people about this procedure."

People who feel that they would benefit from such a procedure could visit KEM hospital's plastic surgery OPD on Tuesday and Thursday.