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Doctors Reattach Severed Hand in Marathon Surgery

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dubai — In a rare procedure of two seven-hour surgeries, doctors at Welcare Hospital successfully reattached the totally severed hand of an Indian worker.

Early morning on August 26, 30-year-old carpenter Tajis Mohan Patel accidentally chopped off his hand while trying to switch off the woodcutting machine.

"I did not feel anything except as if an electric current had run through my body," explains Tajis. "The reality hit me only later when I saw my hand lying on the floor and blood gushing from the wound," he adds.

Colleagues took charge immediately and rushed Tajis to Shaikh Khalifa Hospital in Ajman. "It took us 15 minutes to reach the hospital," he adds.

Doctors at Khalifa Hospital tightly bandaged the severed stump and put the hand in ice and an antiseptic solution. It was only until afternoon that the patient was referred to Welcare.

"This quick action has actually saved the hand and made work easier for us," explains Dr Mohan Rangaswamy, Specialist Plastic Surgeon at Welcare Hospital who performed a seven-hour re-implantation surgery to rejoin the severed bones and blood vessels.

When an organ is detached from the body, it can remain in warm ischemia (without blood supply) for up to six hours. If preserved in cold ischemia, it can stay up to 24 hours.

"We do not come across such cases very often. Besides, the reattachment may not be 100 per cent successful in all such surgeries," he says.

The doctors have to find the end of the 'good' blood vessels and reattach them.

"The bones (in Tajis's case) have been fixed using stainless steel wires which will be pulled out after a month-and-a-half," says Dr Rangaswamy.

Tajis underwent the second seven-hour surgery on Monday to reconnect his nerves and tendons. "This was a microscopic surgery since these vessels are as small as 1-1.5 millimetres," said the doctor.

Despite undergoing the trauma and shock, Tajis remains a composed man. "It will be another four months before the numbness will ease. But I am sure his hand will be fully functional as before the accident," says the doctor.

On Thursday, Dr Rangaswamy received a similar case in which three fingers of a worker were partly severed by a metal cutter.

"In this case, the fingers are still attached to the hand, therefore, there can be no delay in carrying out the surgery," says the doctor.

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