

# More people should register as stem cell donors: experts

Staff Reporter

**CHENNAI:** Ankit Vaghasia and Jinal Patel had never heard of each other, and until this week, never met.

And yet, one year ago, when 17-year-old Ankit was in need of a stem cell transplant to treat his acute myeloid leukaemia, 24-year-old Jinal donated her cells to him.

It wasn't an easy process, said Raghu Rajagopal, chief executive officer of DATRI Blood Stem Cell Donors Registry, which brought the two together.

On Wednesday, speak-

ing at Apollo Hospitals, where the stem cell transplantation took place, he said getting the donation required counselling Jinal's family, her fiancé and his family, and even their community.

"But Jinal was determined to donate and made sure the process went through," he said.

Over 1,00,000 Indians are diagnosed with blood cancer and other blood-related disorders every year. Stem cell donations can go a long way towards increasing their survival chances, said paediatric

hemato-oncologist Revathi Raj.

"But finding donors within the family is very difficult, especially now, with smaller families. More people should come forward and register as donors. They can make a huge difference to someone's life, she said.

"I am happy and proud to have saved Ankit's life. If you are a match for someone, you must donate your stem cells," said Jinal.

"Jinal has given me a new life and I thank her with all my heart," said Ankit.