

When donor met donee — a stem cell story

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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IN A rare event organised by DATRI, India's largest unrelated blood stem cell donors registry, blood stem cell donor Sajat Jain and recipient Nilesch Kumar Sinha met for the first time on Thursday, a year after the transplant took place.

In March 2015, Nilesch was diagnosed with immune thrombocytopenic purpura, and at a later stage, aplastic anemia was detected. He was brought to Tata Medical Centre in Kolkata from Bombay Hospital, and was told that a blood stem cell transplant was required.

Sajat Jain, who runs a health-care analytics start-up, had registered with DATRI in 2014 as a blood stem cell donor. He was found to be a potential match for Nilesch. With both agreeing for the procedure, the process took place in November 2015 at the Tata Medical Centre in Kolkata.

"Doctors told me that I have 40 per cent chance of survival, and the donor had to be from India. It would not have been possible if

not for people like Sajat, who came forward and donated stem cells," said Nilesch after gifting Sajat a drawing made by his children.

Sajat said he was glad for the chance to save someone's life. "I would like to thank DATRI for giving me the chance to save his life. I am glad that I was a part of it," he said.

DATRI is India's largest adult unrelated blood stem cell donors registry, which helps patients find a blood stem cell donor. Through its registry, it finds healthy and genetically-matched donors.

"The risk of stem cell donation is much less than crossing the street in front of Tata Medical Centre. There is no permanent or long-term consequence to stem cells donors. For many suffering from fatal blood disorders like blood cancer and thalassemia, a blood stem cell transplant is the only hope for survival. Till date, 13 patients from Tata Medical Centre have found their life-saving donors from DATRI. However, we still have a large number of patients awaiting a matched donor," said Mammen Chandy, director of Tata Medical Centre.

