3yr Old Undergoes Surgeries to Remove Caterpillar Hair from Her Right Eye

Mulund, 1ˢᵗ Feb, 2016: A three year old from Navi Mumbai had travelled to Karad with her familyto her grandmother's house, as she played in the garden a Caterpillar fell into her right eye. Her parents rushed her to a local clinic as the pricking increased and the child couldn't open her eye. The Physician saw over 150 strands of Caterpillar hair lodged into the eye; he precariously removed about 60-70% hair, under anesthesia. However, the remaining bunch of hair could not be removed and continued to cause irritation in the child's eye.

The Physician informed the girl's parents that there were a few more strands of hair left in the eye that couldn't be removed and they should consult a specialist in city. Returning home the very next day, the Sandecha family consulted their local Ophthalmologist in Navi Mumbai, who, upon examining the baby, referred them to **Dr Girija Suresh, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon at Fortis Hospital, Mulund**. The baby was rushed to Fortis Hospital in Mulund. Initially, the baby wouldn't allow the doctor to carry out examination. Eventually, the examination had to be done under General Anesthesia. *"The foreign bodies like stiff Caterpillar hair, which are not visible to the naked eyes, have tendency to get lodged deep inside the eye and can cause a lot of agony to the patient. Our challenge increased multifold as we were dealing with a 3yr old patient who would not know how to express her condition,"* said Dr Girija.

Upon examination, the doctor found 25-30 strands of Caterpillar hair in the lower lid and about 8-10 strands in the upper eyelid. There were visible rough scratches on the surface of the Cornea surface caused due to continuous friction with the Caterpillar hair. Removal of the hair on the Cornea was undertaken under General Anesthesia, with the help of an operating microscope. *"The condition caused by caterpillar hair in eyes is known as **Caterpillar Hair Induced Ophthalmitis(CHIO),** which is inflammation of eyes caused due to friction with the hair strands. This is condition is not reported very frequently. The treatment for this condition involves removal of hair with the use of fine forceps,"* said Dr Girija. The procedure lasted for over 1.2 hours as the team of doctors precariously removed each hair strand.

Suspecting few strands of hair could still have remained buried deeper within the lids, Dr Girija cautioned the Sandechas that the problem might reoccur. After few days, the parents called the

doctor again, complaining that their daughter was unable to open her eyes. This was the third time when the child had to undergo the treatment to remove the hair strands from her eye. On examination, doctors found 2 strands in the lower lid and 4-5 in the upper lid of the eye and one in the lid margin. Dr Girija skillfully managed to remove all hair, which took about 30-40 minutes. After double-checking, the child was sent back to home.

Unfortunately, a week later, the child complained about the problem and was rushed back to Fortis Hospital, Mulund. This time, Dr Girija suggested not giving General Anesthesia to the patient as she was suffering from cold and cough. The doctor examined the patient without Anesthesia and couldn't find anything; the baby still couldn't open her eye. The doctor poured few eye drops to see if there was anything left in the eye, and found one stray hair which had scratched the baby's cornea. After pouring few more drops, the baby was able to open her eye. Eventually, the doctor suggested waiting until she recovered from cough and cold. In next 3-4 days, after the baby recovered, the doctor removed the remaining strand of hair from lid of her right eye.

Dr Girija added, "*If left untreated or not allowed to heal, scratches can catch infection. Hence, complete removal of Caterpillar hair is absolutely necessary. For complete treatment, thorough attempts should be made to ensure removal of caterpillar hair from the eye. Once the superficial strands of hair are removed, the patient should be re-evaluated, as deeper setae may resurface after the surface inflammation subsides. This occurred in the case of baby Vedika. However, with the last follow-up, we are certain of total removal of the strands.*"

Vijay Sandecha, Vedika's father, is a relieved man. "*Dr Girija Suresh has been a savior for us. I felt so helpless seeing my 3-year old child in so much pain; but Dr Girija reassured us throughout this period that kept us hopeful of her recovery.*" It's been four weeks and the baby is keeping absolutely fine. She has no more irritation in her eye and the doctors are now sure that there won't be any more irritants in her eye.

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