

City doctors repair rare rupture in wall dividing heart ventricles

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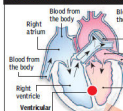
Mumbai: A 68-year-old woman was recently rushed to a hospital after she vomited blood through the night. The doctors first thought that she had a peptic ulcer. The ECG, though, showed that something was wrong with her heart. Further tests revealed that she had suffered such a massive heart attack that the wall between her heart's ventricles had ruptured.

Joyce Kamble, a resident of Bandra, first felt uneasy on the night of April 11. "She kept getting sick even though she had no reason. By morning, we noticed that she was vomiting clots of blood," said Sandeep, Joyce's son.

It was then that her family rushed her to the nearby Lilavati Hospital's casualty ward, where her condition was first diagnosed as peptic ulcer. Since she also had low blood pressure and scanty urine, the doctors then sent her for an ECG. Doctors soon learnt that she had suffered a massive heart attack, which had also ruptured her heart's septum, the wall that divides the two main pumping halves of the heart.

"Because of lack of blood supply the septum had become weak. When she got a

DANGEROUS BREACH



WHAT IS POST-INFARCTION VENTRICULAR SEPTAL DEFECT?

- It involves one or more holes in the wall of a heart that separates right & left ventricles.
- Generally, this condition occurs congenitally. Sometimes, it is a consequence of a major heart attack.
- Incidence of this complication, though, is minuscule at 1.5% of all heart attacks.
- Intensity of the heart attack and peculiarity of coronary blood supply to the heart decides the extent of rupture of the ventricular septum.

IN THE RECENT CITY CASE...

➤ Joyce Kamble (68) suffered a rupture in the wall between the heart's two main pumping chambers.

Blood from the left ventricle flooded the right, and then the lungs.

heart attack, her left ventricle pumped with great pressure, which ruptured the ventricle," said Dr Pawan Kumar, cardiac surgeon, who operated on Joyce.

The doctors then conducted an angiography, which showed that there was a block in the coronary artery. By the time doctors could understand the problem, Joyce's blood pressure had dropped further. They, therefore, rushed her for an emergency surgery.

"Her heart was very weak due to the recent heart attack and there was a huge blood clot present in her left ventricular cavity which posed danger of embolization (outpourage of blood supply) to the brain. But in a way, it was thick clot that was responsible for keeping her alive before the surgery, as it plugged the rupture a little," said Dr Kumar.

The doctors also found it difficult to suture the rupture, as the septum is generally fragile. "We had to put a patch and then suture it. We also removed the clot and did a bypass grafting for the block in the artery," he said and added that only 1,200 such surgeries have been reported across the world so far.

A fortnight has passed since the surgery and Joyce now appears to be doing fine. "It is the grace of God and the expertise of doctors that have saved me. I feel perfectly fine and ready to go home," Joyce said.

➤ Complications following VSD could include flooding of blood in the right side of heart and lungs, resulting in early congestive heart failure. This, in turn, could lead to low cardiac output, renal shutdown and ultimately death.

➤ Surgery has up to 90% mortality in 1,200 operations reported worldwide.