

We fought & we won-Our battle against my son's eye cancer

We are a small family of professionals from Nagpur. We had been blessed with our first child, the apple of our eyes. We first saw a twinkle in the eye of our newborn son when he was a few months old. We were so happy thinking of it as a spark of brightness and never thought that anything would go wrong.

When our baby grew up to be a year and a half old, we detected the sparkle in both his eyes. I felt this was not normal and took our son for a check-up with an ophthalmologist in our city. The doctor checked my boy and wrote a prescription advising a consultation with Dr. Santosh G. Honavar of CFS immediately. The very same evening we, that is my wife, my son and I flew to Hyderabad and got an almost immediate appointment with Dr. Santosh. After various tests our son was diagnosed with "Bilateral Retinoblastoma" meaning cancerous tumour in both eyes. For a layman this means tumour in both eyes in children.

We were completely shattered. After the initial shock, we realised that we had to be strong and tackle the illness. We learnt that this is common in children but the causes for this kind of cancer in children are not clear. I checked my family history up to three generations- myself, my father and my grandfather, but there was no history of the disease. So, it was possible that my son contracted this during gestation.

The treatment plan was drawn out by Doctor Santosh. He is a very experienced doctor in his field. His expertise made us feel more confident. Soon, the treatment to eliminate the tumour started. Early detection by Dr. Santosh and timely intervention made the treatment easier- with use of chemotherapy and laser.

In the Centre, we met parents of other children undergoing the same treatment. It was really an eye opener to find how other people dealt with this issue. We would exchange experiences on how to cope with the situation, like being prepared for eventualities, handling emotions etc.

The treatment was not as expensive as we thought it would be. We were also given the option of paying in instalments- through easy EMIs. This was God's sent because it is very difficult for a middle-class family like ours to raise

funds quickly, including travel expenses. Ultimately when my son started getting better, I alone accompanied him for treatment. The interactive and efficient staff also made it easier to manage our son during treatments because only I was accompanying him. The staff at CFS is very child-friendly and more importantly, they know what exactly an unwell child needs.

As my son's condition improved, the frequency of visits reduced. From visiting once in every three weeks, to once in a month, then once in two months and then gradually to once in a year. An annual check-up is still required.

Thanks to Doctor Santosh and his team, my son, now 9 years old, leads a very normal life. He just needs to take care that he does not hurt his eyes, but he goes to school regularly, plays games like basketball and does everything any normal 9 year old would do. I would give all credit for my son's recovery to Dr. Santosh and the staff at Centre for Sight.