
LIVER CANCER SURGERY APPEAL

NEWSLETTER 1

HOW IT ALL BEGAN



Nariman Karanjia (centre) with his surgical team

'Great oaks from small acorns grow' springs to mind.

In a chance conversation with Nariman Karanjia he told me of his special interest in surgery for liver cancer. It was then I first heard and learn about the CUSA (Cavitron Ultrasonic Surgical Aspirator), which he regarded as a vital piece of equipment for use in liver cancer surgery. I was inspired by his enthusiasm and an idea, like a seed planted in my mind, grew and I knew it was important to me to raise funds to purchase a CUSA. The next step was to set up a 'charity' and just two years ago The Liver Cancer Surgery Appeal was registered with the Charity Commission.

WHAT NEXT?

Almost immediately, the funds were given an enormous boost with a legacy of £10,000, a thank you to the surgeon. Since its registration there have been lots of other donations, each one very gratefully received and much appreciated by Nariman Karanjia. For those people, it is clearly something special to contribute to our Appeal.

I approached many of the Charitable Trusts willing to support our objective and had success. During the first year we held one fundraising event which put the 'fun' into fundraising and most importantly raised local awareness of the Appeal as well as funds! Therefore, much sooner than anticipated, a CUSA was ordered.

WHAT IS THE CUSA?

It is a piece of equipment which was originally designed for use in neurosurgery and has now been adapted for liver surgery. It has a hand piece with a tip which is the link to the patient. The liver, which has an enormous blood supply, has blood vessels and bile ducts which are made of firm fibrous tissue and many liver cells. The tip of the hand piece oscillates fragmenting the cells and leaving the other vessels exposed which enables the surgeon to divide them without any significant blood loss. This is crucial and more than 80% of patients at The Royal Surrey County Hospital undergoing liver surgery using a CUSA have not required a blood transfusion. This reduces potential problems. While it is possible to remove small segments of the liver containing tumours, anything up to two thirds of the liver may safely be removed by using special methods. Patients with three or four tumours in the liver may now be offered surgery. On average they spend 12 days in hospital following surgery.

From the moment of its arrival it has been in regular use at the Royal Surrey. It is there to benefit anyone who has a need and is suitable for liver cancer surgery. To date 35 operations have been performed on patients diagnosed with liver cancer.

"My life's ambition is to provide patients with liver cancer some hope for the future and a possible chance of long term enduring cure."

Nariman Karanjia

THANK YOU

TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED TO THIS APPEAL

It is a remarkable achievement in such a short time to have raised sufficient funds from patient and other donations, fundraising and Charitable Trusts to purchase the CUSA and a Tissomat, which is a device for spraying a sealant on to the cut surface of the liver.

EVENTS

A most enjoyable supper with entertainment was held several months ago, it was a huge success financially and, particularly special, as it was a family occasion surrounded by friends who were delighted to see the host so well following liver surgery.

A Pro-Am Golf Day has been organised by a patient. It should be a wonderful day, a tournament played in idyllic surroundings followed by a dinner for players and sponsors.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

To purchase a CryoNeedle which is an instrument capable of destroying the body's tissue, it can therefore be applied to malignant tumours. It is done by the use of extreme cold in a localised part of the body and the objective will be to destroy liver tumours in those patients who are inoperable. As you would expect, this is a procedure requiring great skills.

EXCITING NEWS

The Appeal has received sponsorship from Taylor Woodrow plc to print 'a patient guide to the disease of liver cancer' which has been written by Nariman Karanjia. It is intended to give a good understanding and explain the choices of treatment for those with the disease and offering potential cure of liver cancer.

A PATIENT'S STORY

"I suppose the worst part is being told that you don't have long to live. It comes out of the blue because you usually have no inkling whatsoever. At 47 years I thought my symptoms were an upset stomach. There seems so much of life that has not been fulfilled. I need an urgent bowel operation, this will extend my life expectancy from just a few days to a few months as it is my liver which will gradually fail as a result of the disease spreading unnoticed over several years.

The message hits home in the same way it must feel to win the lottery jackpot. To begin with the words don't sink in. So remote a chance, yet, it is you that all this is happening to. An absolute vacuum replaces the elation that a prize-winner must feel.

After the surgery it is difficult to plan ahead as all the normal routine and goals are gone. It seems logical to make some preparations so that my wife will not have

so much to do after I die. I start a course of chemotherapy, this may slow the spread of the disease. The hospital treatment numbs my body and soul but I find good company from others suffering the same. The relentless three day routine every two weeks becomes an ordeal, why are so many suffering the same symptoms of the same disease? Why had I not heard about this before, after all isn't breast cancer in the news every day?

After six months of this regime the strength of my treatment is increased. Some months later my liver finally responds. I am given a short period of remission, then a series of tests which indicate the chance to have a second operation to re-sect my liver, taking away the worst part. I am told it will not be a cure but I should live longer as a result. At the same time I do not realise how unique this chance is, for even on a global scale, this is pioneering surgery. Many of the friends I had made during chemotherapy were not being given

this privilege. They and thousands like them are literally written-off each year.

The surgery is not as debilitating as its ten hours would suggest. Within a week or so I am invited to talk to another patient to inspire confidence! Following my recovery I have more chemotherapy and then remission, absolute bliss! I am now in a period of relative "normality" which has been for six months or so. I need no medication, I work full-time, have holidays with my family, it really is the greatest gift I have ever received. All the stories about changing one's outlook on life are true, you see things in a different light and you also don't waste time!

The odd thing is that although you become conditioned to life expectancy being so shortened by the disease, the prospect of even a short extension is elating. Life is so precious, there is so much that can be achieved when you are given a chance."

A PERSONAL MESSAGE

In two years almost £37,000 has been donated to the Appeal, I find this quite amazing and am deeply appreciative of the contributions. Some of them are very personal to me and particularly meaningful as they come from patients of mine. I remember each one. I am delighted so many of the Charitable Trusts have sent donations, as this is an endorsement of the work which is being carried out here in The Royal Surrey County Hospital.

With the right equipment, I now have confidence to perform long and complicated liver operations as it makes the procedure so much safer. To date I have done 35 such operations using the CUSA and associated equipment bought by

the Appeal fund. The theatre staff (and myself) all received training from the Company to ensure the best possible use is gained from the surgical equipment.

My life's ambition is to provide patients with liver cancer some hope for the future and a possible chance of long term enduring cure.

I should like to warmly thank all those who have donated to our Appeal.



Nariman Karanjia MS FRCS (Gen)
Appeal Director

JUST A LITTLE ABOUT THE SURGEON

Nariman Karanjia did his undergraduate training at Guy's Hospital in London and qualified in 1983. His early surgical training was at The Royal Surrey County Hospital in Guildford. Thereafter he was appointed to the St. George's Hospital based surgical rotation. His surgical training has been centered in the south east and his choice of posts being driven by his developing interest in hepatobiliary (liver, gall bladder and biliary tree) and colorectal (bowel and rectum) cancer surgery.

He spent 18 months with Professor Heald in Basingstoke working on patients with bowel cancer.

An interesting but demanding 18 months research project on the pancreas was completed by him in California.

He has undertaken periods of specialist training in liver surgery in France and has written papers on the subject.

Like most surgeons, he is able to undertake most general surgical procedures.



Appeal Organiser