

Unable to walk earlier, a spinal surgery transformed this Lucknow girl's life

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New Delhi: A 24-year-old Lucknow girl, Sujata Chaudhary, who had undergone a delicate spinal surgery couple of years ago, has bounced back in life with her modeling career, setting the ramp on fire in the recent Mr and Miss U.P. Vogue Fashion Show 2017 where she went on to become the first runner up in the competition. From being a patient of a rare spinal cord deformity called spondyloptosis to achieve a doctorate in dentistry, Sujata has broken all barriers and today is a role model for youth of the town by becoming one of the winners of the prestigious beauty pageant. The story behind this achievement is full of struggle and inspirational.

Sujata had spondyloptosis since birth, which is a rare congenital deformity in the spine characterized by complete slip of one vertebra over another. The ailment was undiagnosed and she carried on with her life until in 2009 when she started experience severe pain. Her initial efforts of Yoga did not reap any benefit, and she went for medical counsel. Through a number of leading hospitals across India, doctors were amazed how she was able

to walk and conduct herself. Every healthcare facility she visited either put her on medication or expressed very low chances of recovering from a spinal surgery. This continued until she visited the Indian Spinal Injuries Center (ISIC) in January 2014, and met Dr Vikas Tandon, Consultant Spine Surgeon, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre.

At ISIC, she received the treatment and care, along with her strong determination, which transformed her life. “Sujata spinal deformity was progressive in nature, which aggravated over the years to show severe signs of pain. At age of 22 years, she visited our center complaining of sever back pain, difficulty in walking and performing activities of daily living. In her case, over the years, her deformity caused one of the spinal vertebrae to Jump over another because of congenital defect in her spine, putting severe pressure on the nerve roots, which was the cause of severe pain. She underwent a cumulatively 14-hour, highly delicate, three-staged surgery called Gaines Procedure, over a period of 2 days, in which the front and the back of the spine were opened up for the surgery,” said Dr Vikas Tandon, who personally treated the patient.

Post surgery, Sujata developed bilateral foot drop, which is a known complication of this procedure, due to weakness in nerves and was unable to walk properly. After a brief comprehensive rehabilitation, she was able to walk, gradually recovering, and she began to conduct daily activities. Back in her home town, she continued physiotherapy, determined to become as fit as possible. Over the period of two years, she became completely fit.





“Gaines procedure is one of the major surgeries that a spine surgeon performs. Probably for the first time in Northern India, there has been a case where a patient after undergoing such a major surgery bounced back to life and has gone up to become a winner at a leading beauty pageant.” said Dr H S Chhabra, Medical Director & Chief of Spine Services at Indian Spinal Injuries Centre.

In India, due to negligence and road traffic accidents, thousands of people suffer from spinal injuries causing various types of disabilities. But this story is indicative of how determination of the patient, a strong supporting framework, and exceptional medical assistance can turn around lives of people.

From undergoing a grave spinal surgery, Sujata walks with confidence that awes the audience. These days, apart from continuing her medical practice, she preparing for the next level of her modeling career. Talk about the embodiment of beauty with the brains and resolve of steel and you will find her.