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Stem Cell Therapy Better Than Knee Replacement Procedure

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CHENNAI: When 77-year-old-Manju was diagnosed with arthritis of the knee by her doctors, this UK citizen had little hope of recovery as surgery would be not feasible at her age. Like her, a large number of people in their 40s suffer from arthritis of the knee, a condition that causes severe damage to the cartilage (flexible connecting tissue) in the knee.

Because of cartilage damage, there is constant pain in the knee while walking or doing any other work that uses the leg. The only solution is to remove the damaged cartilage and replace it with the artificial knee.

This requires surgery, and the longevity of the procedure would be nearly 15 -16 years. But doing this procedure during old age is not advisable for many patients.

But there's hope now. For people suffering from chronic pain on the knee joint, a joint preservation procedure is a wise thing to do and one such easy method is mesenchymal stem cells (MSC) therapy.

"This innovative knee therapy is catching up in India," says Dr AK Venkatachalam, orthopaedic surgeon at Guest Hospital. Though the use of stem cells for other ailments is over five years old in India, using the same for knee pain management is gradually picking up in the country.

And here is how MSC therapy for knee pain is generally done: Take a platelet-rich plasma component from the blood, for say, 60 ml of it and centrifuge it, till the component condenses to 10 ml and inject this in the knee. This will help regeneration of cells.

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