

# An uplifting experience

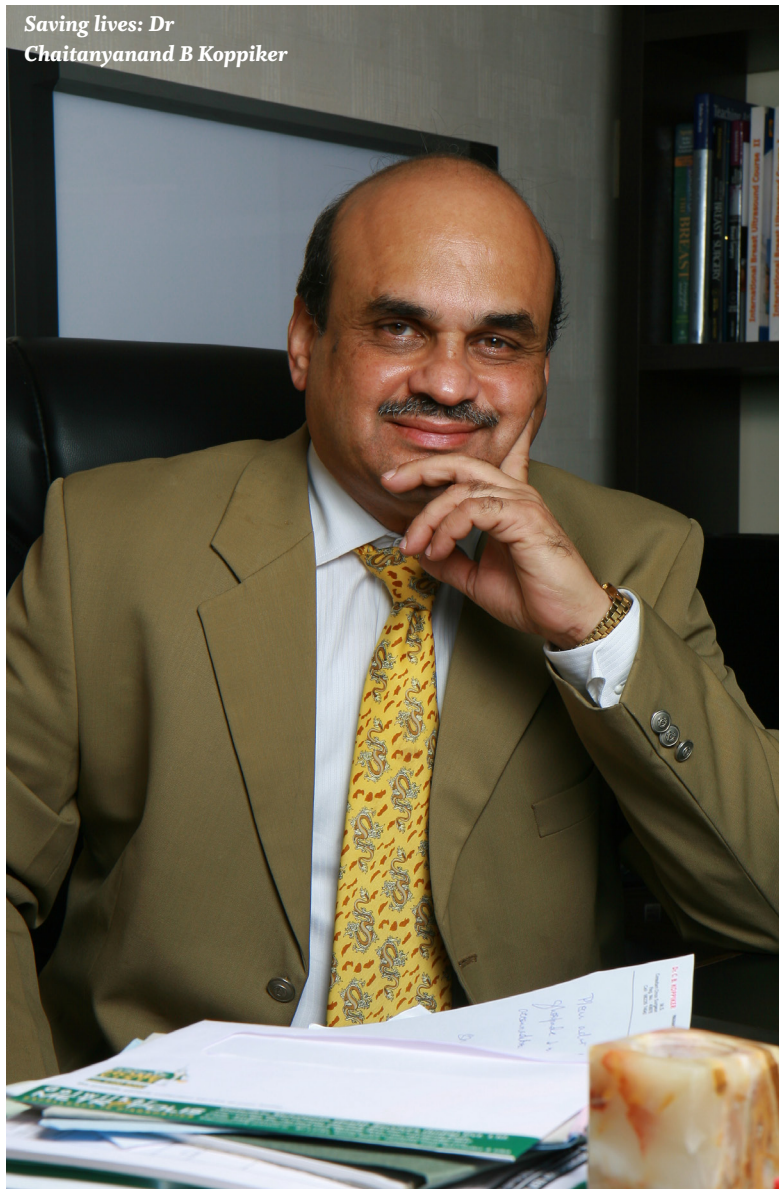
What is the impact of Cosmetic Breast surgery on the quality of life in one stricken by breast cancer is a question that **Dr Chaitanyanand Koppiker** - Peshwa City's leading breast oncoplastic surgeon and cancer surgeon and the doyen behind the 15-year-old haven for those tragically struck by the Dreaded C - the Prashanti Cancer Care Mission (PCCM) - answers for the readers of *Femina*

**C**osmetic surgery for the breast is a well-established surgical faculty. It encompasses surgeries such as a breast lift where the ageing, drooping breast is lifted or perked up, reduced if necessary and reshaped or breast augmentation where the women have their breast size increased. Women globally prefer to have their breasts lifted, reshaped and contoured to make them look younger, beautiful and shapely. These methods improve the quality of life, self-esteem, as women acquire stunning figures with perked up and augmented bust lines.

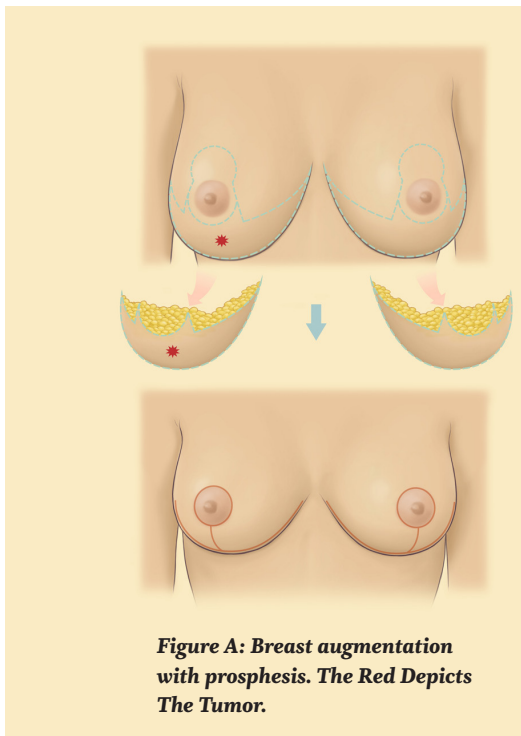
Today, these techniques are used in the treatment of breast cancer. Mastectomy or breast removal which was the standard practice in the early 19th century left the woman mutilated and feeling like 'half a woman' without one breast which severely impacted her quality of life by affecting the body image, self-esteem and sexuality as well throwing them into throes of depression.

Over the last three decades, breast conservation became standard practice globally as a result of path-breaking research. Unfortunately myths and substandard practices rule the roost in our country and hence patients suffer the consequences of these mutilating surgeries.. An oncoplastic surgery is a recent advancement that

Saving lives: Dr Chaitanyanand B Koppiker



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not only saves lives but also ensures excellent cosmesis. Oncoplastic surgery combines principles of plastic surgery with those of cancer surgery and helps women look younger, more shapely after treatment for breast cancer. Thus adding a new dimension to their quality of life. As shown in the figure A the tumor – that is, the red dot is excised in the reduction specimen and the breast is lifted and made to look stunning after surgery for breast cancer.

Mastectomy or breast removal becomes absolutely mandatory in



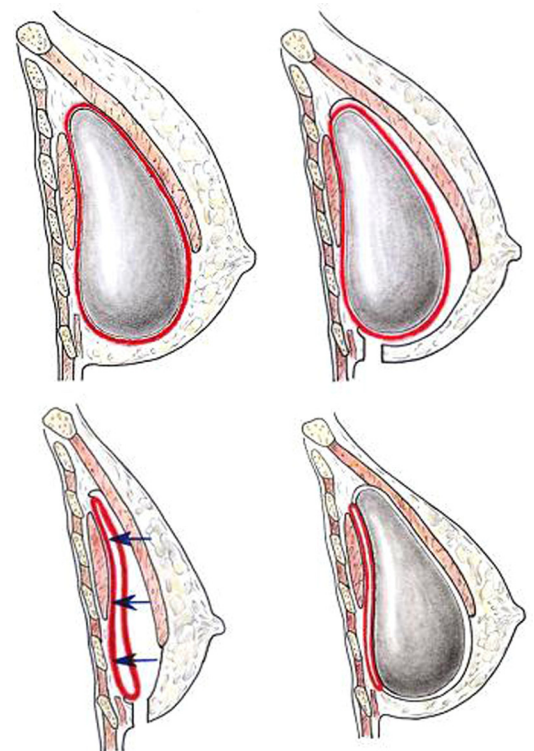
about a quarter to a third of breast cancer patients due to certain compelling reasons such as large tumors, multiple tumors in a breast etc. Various techniques of immediate breast reconstruction – this surgery is done at the same sitting so that women do not need to go under the knife or anesthesia again for a second time) by either using safe breast silicone prosthesis or using borrowed muscle and skin from the back or abdomen – have evolved where women can feel complete immediately after their surgery where the reconstructed breast mimics a natural breast accurately. The silicone prosthesis available today is compact, cohesive and safe.

Today, adjustable breast implants are available where the size of the breast can be modified post-operatively and the patients can play a dynamic role in choosing the correct size and shape. These Breast adjustable implants placed under the breast has silicone plus an adjustable chamber of saline, and the size can be adjusted after surgery. There is no credence to the fact that use of the prosthesis can induce cancer. The incidence of rupture of the prosthesis and other complications are negligible. A recent controversy on the safety of implants arose in Europe. This was because the implants used were made of inferior industrial quality by the company, which were not approved by the United States FDA for medical use. Therefore one must ensure that only implants that are US FDA approved and are made of medically acceptable quality should be used which are safe.

Thus breast surgery has evolved from being simple but mutilating (Radical extirpation of the breast, muscle, skin and lymph nodes from the axilla) to advanced, complex, refined and comprehensive – aimed at providing better quality life. Today, breast saving surgery, Mastectomy (breast removal) or skin saving Mastectomy both with

immediate reconstruction and removal of only one node from the armpit (sentinel node) have replaced radical surgery. These techniques ensure that women feel normal, have an enhanced younger look and have markedly less side effects. Breast saving treatment and breast reconstruction options maintain their femininity, body image, sexuality and the sense of being complete and prevent depression and sense of loss in women. They also address issues related to the partners psyche and reduces marital problems. 'Conventional Mastectomy' causes physical problems as well such as shoulder stiffness, massive swelling of the arm and postural problems.

To conclude Oncoplastic Breast Units address the issues of breast treatment globally and provide an option of leaving or creating an intact perfect breast post-treatment. ●



**Figure B: Expandable Prosthesis Where Patients Can Post-Operatively Have The Size Of Their Breast Suitably Adjusted.**