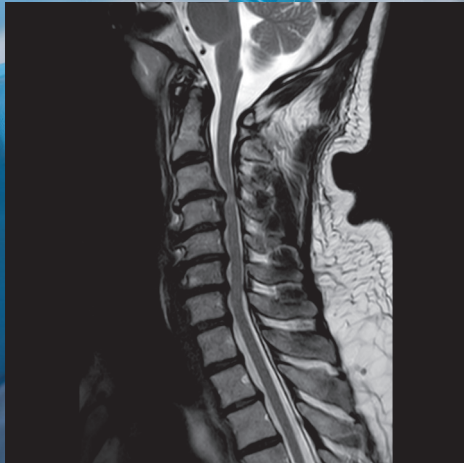




A Milestone in Spine Surgery at Melomed Mitchells Plain Hospital.

Preventing Paralysis Through Advanced Cervical Decompression.



Melomed Mitchells Plain hospital recently marked a significant clinical milestone with the successful treatment of a patient suffering from cervical myelopathy, a serious and potentially devastating spinal condition. This case represents the first time a complex cervical decompression of this nature has been performed at Melomed Mitchells Plain under the expertise of Dr Hammad Gamieldien Spinal Orthopaedic Surgeon at Melomed, highlighting the growing scope and capability of advanced spinal surgery offered locally.

Mr Abdul Rashid Abrahams, a 59-year-old Eskom project manager with a background of type 2 diabetes, presented with a three-week history of severe, persistent pain radiating from his neck into his left arm, accompanied by pins-and-needles sensations and progressive weakness. Simple daily tasks became increasingly difficult, and he reported struggling to lift objects with his left arm. More concerning, he later developed difficulty with fine motor skills such as buttoning clothes and tying shoelaces, as well as stiffness and weakness in his left leg.

Clinical assessment raised concern for spinal cord involvement, prompting urgent imaging. MRI scans revealed severe central spinal canal stenosis at the C3/4 level, caused by a large disc-osteophyte complex compressing the spinal cord. Importantly, the scan showed early myelopathic changes within the cord itself, indicating that damage was already occurring.

Cervical myelopathy is a progressive condition. Without timely surgical intervention, Mr Abrahams would have been at high risk of irreversible neurological deterioration, ultimately progressing to quadriplegia or paralysis. Conservative treatment is ineffective once spinal cord compression reaches this stage, making surgery not optional, but essential.

Following multidisciplinary discussion, urgent surgical intervention was planned. On 8 January 2026, Mr Abrahams underwent a C3/4 anterior cervical discectomy and fusion (ACDF). The operation involved meticulous removal of the offending disc material and osteophytes, full decompression of the spinal cord, and stabilisation of the spine using a cage and bone graft. Despite technical challenges related to anatomy, the procedure was completed safely and successfully.

The outcome was immediate and remarkable. By the first postoperative day, Mr Abrahams reported complete resolution

of his left arm pain and significant improvement in his neurological symptoms. At two-week follow-up, he was recovering well and expressed great satisfaction with the result.

This case underscores the importance of early recognition of cervical myelopathy and demonstrates the hospital's ability to deliver high-level, life-altering spinal care, preventing permanent disability and dramatically improving patient outcomes.

Mr Abrahams quoted: "Dr Gamieldien is an excellent doctor. His confidence and assertiveness immediately made me feel calm and reassured. From my very first visit, he explained everything about my neck condition in great detail, ensuring I fully understood what was required. Both before and after surgery, his care and attention were exceptional. Every visit felt welcoming, and being under Dr Gamieldien's care was like being in safe hands at all times. I would rate him 100 out of 100 - this is simply my honest opinion."

This milestone further reflects the exceptional level of specialist care available at Melomed Mitchells Plain Hospital through the expertise of Dr Hammad Gamieldien, whose advanced training and experience in complex spinal surgery make interventions of this nature possible. His ability to diagnose, intervene decisively and perform intricate cervical decompression procedures ensures patients receive timely, specialist-led care close to home. Under his leadership, Melomed continues to expand its capacity to manage complex spinal conditions, offering patients hope, mobility and protection from life-altering neurological injury.



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