

Daily News

Tuesday, 26th September 2000

ISMAIL MAKING MUSIC AFTER OP SAVES ARM

By SARA HORTON



BAHRAINI Ismail Hussain is making sweet music again thanks to revolutionary surgery, which saved his arm. Ismail Hussain was cut so badly when he fell from a ladder in his Hamad Town home and put his arm through a window, those doctors initially planned to amputate.

They decided to try sewing it back, but the operation, in July 1998, left Mr. Hussain in such unbearable, continuous pain that he wanted the arm cut off. Just a waft of cold air from an air-conditioner crossing his arm was enough to send searing pain through his body and he could not bear to be touched at all.

Sleeping was almost impossible and, because he could not use his hand at all, the Bahrain Airport Services cargo handler's future looked bleak.

Now, a further two operations later, Mr. Hussain is enjoying life again, back at work and supporting his family – even playing the India-based micro-vascular surgeon Dr. Ashok Gupta and an International Hospital of Bahrain (IHB) team used nerves from Mr. Hussain's leg to replace those which had been damaged in his arm, repaired his tendons and removed bad tissue.

Mr. Hussain's friend Bader Radhi, speaking on his behalf, said the months after the first operation, at another hospital, were a nightmare for Mr. Hussain. "If you touched his hand it was like you had given him an electric shock," said Mr. Radhi.

"He was always uncomfortable and he hid his arm in his clothes to stop even the air from the air-conditioner passing over it. "He was in so much pain, he had no sleep and he did not let his family near him. He wished that his arm had been cut off."

Mr. Hussain's friends and family raised some money for him to have further treatment and the IHB helped with the costs of the operations and follow-up physiotherapy. "After the first operation at the IHB (in February last year), Ismail slept for four days," said Mr. Radhi. "He was so happy to be able to sleep again after all that time."

Two months later, Mr. Hussain was back at work and happy to be supporting his four children once more. Last May, another operation was conducted to transfer tendons in his hand so he could use his fingers and thumb normally and do the simple things we all take for granted.

"The first operation was aimed at providing sensitivity to his fingers and relieving the pain which was the result of the nerves not being properly joined together," said Dr Gupta.

"We needed to wait before carrying out the next operation because the nerves needed time to regenerate," he said. "The second operation put movement in the thumb and fingers."

A comprehensive rehabilitation program, conducted by physical medicine and rehabilitation department head Dr Emil Hanna, reduced the stiffness, and helped Mr. Hussain to use the new tendon.

Now he can write, drive and even play the oud. Mr. Hussain will be meeting Dr. Gupta again this week to see whether he needs another operation to refine his ability to make small movements.