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A team of doctors at a city hospital here have performed minimal access spine surgery on an 82-year-old 'Ankylosing Spondylitis' patient.

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MUMBAI: A team of doctors at a city hospital here have performed minimal access spine surgery on an 82-year-old 'Ankylosing Spondylitis' (Bamboo Spine) patient by implanting 14 screws in his spinal cord, a rare medical feat.

Ankylosing Spondylitis, commonly known as Bamboo Spine, is a form of rheumatic arthritis which is associated with long-term inflammation of the joints in the spine.

Symptoms include pain and stiffness from the neck down to the lower back.

"Ibrahim Mullaji had a fall in November 2014 and post the fall he was constantly complaining of an excruciating back pain. In February 2015, he became totally bed ridden. Spine Surgeon, who led the team of doctors in the surgery at Global Hospital, told reporters yesterday.

He said Mullaji had first visited the hospital in the first week of March and upon investigations it was found that he had developed 3 Andersson Lesions (AL).

"After carefully examining his case and meticulously weighing all the options, we decided that there was no option but to perform surgery on the patient. The surgery was all the more challenging as the patient had other complications as well," he said.

The patient had fluid in both his lungs commonly known as pleural effusion and was also found to have very low protein levels which could have resulted in further complications, added Peshattiwar.

He said that there was no chance of performing the traditional open surgery as the area being operated upon had to be opened with a long incision to allow the surgeon to view and access the anatomy which would have led to loss of blood and the chance of patient not surviving post the surgery would have escalated.

"The team then decided to conduct a minimally invasive surgery. A minimally invasive spine surgery does not involve a long incision. It avoids significant damage to the muscles surrounding the spine and results in less pain after surgery and a faster recovery,"

Peshattiwar said.

"It was gratifying to see him go home walking. He has recovered well and now has started performing all his daily chores by himself. It was a huge risk as there is always a danger of life involved in the surgery, and spine is extremely sensitive area," the doctor, who conducted the complex surgery in the last week of March, said.