

# The Medical Campaigner

Having worked in the industry for the last 15 years, consultant plastic surgeon Dr Adnan Tahir's speciality lies in breast reconstruction.

"Every plastic surgeon has a specialisation. I chose mine because I think breast cancer is a devastating disease and all women have the right to be offered choices in breast reconstruction surgery – something that's not really being dealt with at a primary care level."

To be able to offer them some sort of reconstructive option where you can rebuild the breast to what it was – or, at least, close to what it was before surgery – would help boost their self-esteem tremendously, feels Dr Adnan, who practises at Dubai Cosmetic Surgery, and says he spends most of his time educating patients, who come with little or no knowledge about procedures available to them after a mastectomy. "There are two kinds of reconstruction surgeries: immediate and delayed," he explains. "The first happens right after the mastectomy, and allows women to come out of the operation theatre with something that resembles the opposite breast. The second is done much later, but the aesthetic results are not as superior."

Breast cancer is not just a woman's fight, says the surgeon. "As a man of science, I would always encourage awareness of breast cancer, even among men, because early diagnosis and treatment is key to this disease. Awareness, among men, of this disease is important to the overall health of a family and the upbringing of the children."

The primary reason for deaths due to breast cancer in the developing world is because of late presentation, he reminds us. "And that is, in part, because we're still seeing a huge taboo in terms of cultural issues. But, cancer is cancer – and I think it should be above all these man-made cultural taboos. The masses have to be educated about life-threatening diseases – especially considering that, with modern science, one can return to a pretty normal life after treatment is done at an early stage." **W**



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