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PRESS RELEASE

International honour for Dudley consultant

A world-renowned consultant in Dudley whose pioneering work has transformed the lives of patients has been made a Doctor of Philosophy by a leading European academic medical centre.

Professor Sauid Ishaq, a consultant gastroenterologist at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, received the doctorate from Amsterdam University Medical Centre for his pioneering work on endoscopic treatment of Zenker's diverticulum.

Professor Ishaq introduced the procedure to treat this benign but profoundly life-affecting condition to the UK, and Dudley has become the national centre. The award of his doctorate follows publication of his thesis on the procedure.

He has also co-chaired the global guidelines on the treatment, for which the evidence came from the work carried out at Russells Hall Hospital.

He said: "We are treating patients from all over the country and are the highest volume centre in the world. I feel very humble that this has come from the talented and dedicated team at our hospital and not, for instance, a London hospital."

The PhD ceremony saw Professor Ishaq face a panel of six experts on a video call. They questioned his thesis' methods, design, outcomes and likely impact.

Zenker's diverticulum is a rare condition in which a large sac develops in the upper part of the oesophagus (gullet/food pipe), known medically as a pharyngeal pouch. The most common symptoms are difficulty in swallowing, regurgitation of food and choking during eating.

Zenker's diverticulum significantly affects people's quality of life. One of Professor Ishaq's patients, who was on a liquid diet due to the condition, suffered with fatigue, weight loss, dysphagia, regurgitation, halitosis and hoarseness. He said: "There is hope for a normal life after endoscopic Zenker's surgery. I entered Russells Hall Hospital at 8am, had surgery and was discharged by 3pm. My quality of life had significantly improved after only one week."

The treatment sees a flexible telescope passed down the throat and the bridge of the muscle that leads to the pharyngeal sac is cut with a very small, sophisticated knife. The base of the muscle is clipped with a metal clip to prevent any perforation.

This treatment is effective in over 85 per cent of cases and patients have a much shorter hospital stay and less discomfort after the procedure.

The team in Dudley have trained others across the country, while Professor Ishaq has also travelled to Japan to introduce the technique.

Chief executive Diane Wake said: "Congratulations to Professor Ishaq on this honour. We are very proud that Dudley is playing such a central role in the development of this treatment, for which he is such a great advocate. It makes such a tremendous difference to people's lives and we have received many letters of thanks from grateful patients."

CAPTION

Professor Sauid Ishaq with his thesis

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Issued by the communications team at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.