

Tonsils removed under hypnosis

2007-11-30 09:07

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Johannesburg - A woman's tonsils were removed under hypnosis and without painkillers or anaesthetics at Milpark Hospital last week.

Liesl van Dreau, 35, from Pretoria was able to eat normally almost immediately after surgery and she recovered so quickly that she was back at work three days later. She didn't use antibiotics or anti-inflammatory tablets and had almost no swelling.

"I had a sensation of pulling during surgery, but felt very little pain," she said.

The surgeon, Dr Kishen Dayal, said there was so little bleeding that he used only half a swab to dab the blood.

"It's the first time I removed tonsils under hypnosis and I was amazed at the result. This opens the way to a range of possibilities, such as doing biopsies under hypnosis in the doctor's rooms rather than an operating theatre. This will save theatre costs and minimise bleeding and the side-effects of drugs."

Initial caution

Van Dreau, who works at a publisher, was initially cautious about having her tonsils removed under hypnosis. She is doing a course in hypnotherapy, where she met Dr Ian Lander, an anaesthetist from Milpark Hospital, who also did the course.

Lander asked if Dayal would be willing to remove Van Dreau's tonsils under hypnosis.

"I was doubtful, but agreed to consult with her. After examining her, I decided to go ahead using specific surgical instruments which would minimise bleeding," Dayal said.

Before surgery Van Dreau had two sessions with Johannesburg hypnotherapist Tom Budge to prepare her.

The procedure was done in a theatre and Van Dreau's condition was monitored throughout in order to apply anaesthetics should it be necessary.

Drank Coke in the recovery room

"It took Tom six minutes to put me under hypnosis. During the 30 minutes of surgery, he told me that I could control the bleeding, that I would not feel any pain and that I was doing well. Afterwards, the whole theatre team applauded."

Dayal said it was the first time he witnessed an adult tonsil patient drinking Coke in the recovery room.

Van Dreau was discharged from hospital an hour later - after a procedure which is usually very painful and traumatic for adults.