

OUR PATIENTS, THEIR STORIES



Name: Megat Abdul Ghaffar
(25 years old)
Condition: Congenital Pulmonary
Atresia Ventricular
Septal Defect

Hi, my name is Megat Abdul Ghaffar and I am 25 years old, currently working as an electrical technician. Due to my heart valve disease, I was referred to IJN as a 1-year-old and since then, I have been a lifelong patient of IJN.

At birth, I was immediately admitted to a government hospital where I was diagnosed with Congenital Pulmonary Atresia Ventricular Septal Defect. It is a very long name but it is simply a congenital heart valve disease. A pulmonary valve, which is a valve between my heart and lungs, did not develop fully at birth and this caused a restricted blood flow from the heart to the lungs, making it difficult for me to breathe.

Following the diagnosis, my family was very devastated as we were told that I could only live up to 9 years old. Eventually, I was referred to IJN where I was to undergo my very first open-heart surgery. It happened in 2000 when I was 3. The surgery involved replacing my heart valve with a plastic one. It was a highly risky surgery indeed, but the surgery went well and I grew to be a happy, healthy kid.

However, when I turned 7 years old, I started noticing that my fingers would turn blue whenever I felt tired. I immediately informed my doctor about this and was told that the plastic valve was due to be replaced. Subsequently, I underwent my second surgery that year. This time, they did a cow valve replacement surgery on me. After my second open-heart surgery, I had to stay at IJN for a very long time, about one and half month. During that period, I had the perfect doctor to look after me. He was very empathetic and took care of me in every way. I remember really liking him and thanks to him, my long stay at the hospital was not entirely dull.

Also, to my delight, my condition improved significantly after the second surgery. Previously, I had to take medications (i.e., aspirin) very often but this was no longer the case. Also most importantly, my life became normal and I could play sports just like the other kids. For example, I could run at full speed and



Left: Megat Abdul Ghaffar standing with IJN doctors that helped him throughout his heart valve disease journey.



Top: Megat recovering from his 2021 Melody TPV surgery.

play rough sports like rugby and football without any difficulties.

I continued to do my follow-ups at IJN once a year and thankfully everything was fine and good. When I turned 21, I got married to the love of my life, Asma Aqilah. Shortly after, I had a lovely baby with my wife. Such blissful events happening in my life one after the other reinforced the fact that I was indeed living a very normal life just like everyone else.

But things changed in August 2021. During my yearly follow-up check, my doctor told me that my heart pressure was unusually high. It turns out that the cow valve replacement from my second surgery did not grow at the same rate as my heart. Strangely, I did not feel anything and if the doctor had not pointed out during the follow-up, I would not have noticed it at all. The doctor suggested Melody TPV to expand my narrow heart valve. It was a simpler procedure compared to the last two as it was not an open-heart surgery. It is a non-surgical option to restore pulmonary valve function in children and adults with congenital heart disease.

But the night before the surgery, I could not sleep because I kept debating about whether or not to go

through with the surgery. I was no longer single. I am now a married man with a family to support and my wife was worried that the surgery might go wrong. Although there have only been 5 patients to have undergone this surgery, I was reassured by my doctor that my condition was common, so the associated risk was low. The surgery did turn out successful and because it was a simple procedure, I only had to stay at the hospital for 3-5 days, unlike my second surgery. Since my third surgery last year, I am back to living a normal life again.

As I have been enjoying a happy normal life, whenever I hear that people have a heart condition, I immediately advise them to go straight to IJN. As mentioned, my family was very devastated when we received a very gloomy prognosis that I could only live up to 9 years. There seemed no hope for me but when I came to IJN, things changed. Thanks to the IJN doctors and their care, I was able to live beyond my childhood. I turned 25 this year, happily married with a lovely 3-year old child.

And last not but least, to anyone out there suffering from a heart condition, I would like to say stay strong and please don't feel scared. It is possible to have a normal life even with a heart condition.