



(From left to right):
CEO of Gleneagles Hospital Ms Tan Poh Lan, Dr Chang Haw Chong, Ivan Skobrev and Dr Eddie Chang

“ I had a great hospital experience here. I loved it. The doctors and nurses were so compassionate, nice and attentive. Even the CEO of Gleneagles Hospital and CMO of ParkwayHealth paid me a personal visit in my ward – that was really unexpected! ... It’s pretty amazing what the surgery had done. One and a half hours and my shoulder was fixed! Dr Chang told me in my first consultation that it would take eight to twelve weeks before I would be back to 90 or 95 percent. And I am certainly looking forward to the day when I can resume my full training with no pain. ”

~Ivan Skobrev~

A QUICK FIX FOR ROTATOR CUFF TEAR

Winter Olympic speed skater **Ivan Skobrev** isn't one who takes to resting easily. But when his left shoulder pain got to the point where he couldn't train and exercise with ease, swim or get a full night's sleep, he knew something more had to be done.

“Over the years, I hurt my left shoulder many times. The pain began gradually about a few months ago when I accidentally knocked my shoulder, but escalated to such a degree that I had problem lifting my arm above shoulder height and would have sleepless nights through persistent pain. The pain would come and go, but it kept lingering. I had seen different doctors, tried physical therapy and received steroid injections to my shoulder each time when the pain came.” A good friend, Olga who lives in Singapore for 14 years recommended him to see orthopaedic specialists Dr Eddie Chang and Dr Chang Haw Chong at Gleneagles Hospital.



During his recent holiday trip to Singapore in mid April 2010 with his girlfriend Yadviga, Ivan met with the uncle and nephew team of Dr Eddie Chang (the uncle) and Dr Chang Haw Chong (the nephew) for an examination of his left shoulder and underwent a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan. Dr Chang Haw Chong, who specialises in orthopaedic treatment of sports injuries, determined that Ivan had torn a tendon of his rotator cuff. "A rotator cuff tear is an injury where the tendon/rotator cuff insertion tears from the bone," he explains. He adds that athletes, weightlifters and those inclined towards frequent activities with repetitive movements of the shoulders can be susceptible to rotator cuff damage. Either a single accident or constant wear of the cuff over a prolonged period can be responsible for a tear in its tendons, causing pain and discomfort in the movement of the shoulder.

"The primary problem that Ivan suffered from was that he had pain and weakness in the shoulder. Because of the impaired blood supply, the rotator cuff did not have the potential to heal itself when it was completely torn." So in his situation, surgery was necessary. Both Dr Eddie Chang and Dr Chang Haw Chong recommended an arthroscopic surgical procedure to repair the damaged tendon and end his pain.

The surgery was carried out on 20 April by Dr Eddie Chang and Dr Chang Haw Chong, upon Ivan's return from his 5-day leisure trip to Bintan. During the keyhole arthroscopic rotator cuff repair, a series of keyhole portals were created into Ivan's shoulder joint through small incisions to visualise the rotator cuff tear and repair it. "Almost all rotator cuff tears can be repaired with arthroscopy and there are clear benefits," says Dr Eddie Chang. By using the latest arthroscopic technique, the tendons heal at about the same rate as in traditional surgery, but the less-invasive procedure has several big advantages. Arthroscopy can be performed with small incisions and excellent visualisation, and patients experience substantially less pain after surgery, which allows them to get back to their normal routine quicker.

Ivan discharged from the hospital a day after the surgery. Despite having a sling around his left arm, he was able to move around with Yadviga to visit a few local attractions, specially arranged for them by ParkwayHealth Patient Assistance Centre (PPAC).

A first-time patient to Gleneagles Hospital, Ivan was thrilled with the care provided by the healthcare team. "I had a great hospital experience here. I loved it. The doctors and nurses were so compassionate, nice and attentive. Even the Chief Executive Officer of Gleneagles Hospital, Ms Tan Poh Lan and Chief Marketing Officer of ParkwayHealth, Mr Kamaljeet Singh Gill paid me a personal visit in my ward – that was really unexpected! I shared with them casually that I planned to discharge but had difficulty getting an accommodation as all the hotels in Singapore were fully booked due to a few major conferences. Much to my delight, Mr Gill not only managed to get me and Yadviga a hotel room within an hour, planned for a sumptuous lunch and even arranged a limousine service to chaperone us for sightseeing, all on the day of my discharge. That was really out of the world!" he commends.

On the surgery that he went through, he says, "It's pretty amazing what the surgery had done. One and a half hours and my shoulder was fixed! Dr Chang told me in my first consultation that it would take eight to twelve weeks before I would be back to 90 or 95 percent. And I am certainly looking forward to the day when I can resume my full training with no pain."

Although it may take a little while for him to get back to training, the Russian speed skater outlined his hopes for the Sochi 2014 Winter Games. When being congratulated for winning the bronze medal in the 5,000 metres and the silver medal in the 10,000 metres at the recent 2010 Winter Olympics in February, Ivan humbly says: "On the whole, I am satisfied with my performance. I have been striving to reach this all my life, since my parents helped me to put on my skates when I was three years old."

Ivan and Yadviga returned to Russia in end April. Although he is not required to return to Singapore for medical follow-up, Ivan says that Dr Chang Haw Chong has offered his contact details for him to keep in close touch whenever he requires. Ivan is glad that he came to Gleneagles Hospital to fix his shoulder, and says that he and Yadviga will be back to Singapore again in future, maybe to deliver their baby.



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