



Life-Changing Surgery at Melomed Bellville.

Advanced Tongue Cancer Treated with Precision, Compassion, and Innovation.

At Melomed Bellville, a remarkable medical milestone was achieved through the expertise of Dr. Raphael Mlauzi, ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat and Head & Neck) Surgeon, and a highly skilled multidisciplinary team. A 63-year-old patient, diagnosed with advanced cancer of the tongue, underwent a life-saving procedure that not only removed the tumour but also restored function and quality of life.

The cancer had affected nearly half of the patient's tongue and had already spread to the lymph nodes in the neck. In a meticulous operation, Dr. Mlauzi and his team performed a hemiglossectomy—removing the cancerous portion of the tongue—along with a right modified radical neck dissection to remove affected lymph nodes while carefully preserving vital structures such as the Internal Jugular Vein and Spinal Accessory Nerve.

This intricate procedure lasted over 8 hours and was carried out under excellent anaesthesia. In real time, Histopathologists confirmed that the cancer had been entirely removed with clear margins, reducing the need for further invasive treatment.

To reconstruct the tongue and ensure the patient could eat and speak again, the Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery team performed a Free Radial Forearm Flap. Skin, muscle, and blood vessels from the patient's forearm were transplanted to the tongue area and precisely connected to the exposed neck blood vessels using microsurgical techniques.

Thanks to the dedication and seamless coordination of multiple departments—including Anaesthesia, Oncology, Speech Therapy, Dietetics, and our compassionate Nursing team—the patient recovered well and was discharged in stable condition.

Following review by the Oncology team, it was determined that no chemoradiation therapy would be necessary at this stage. The patient will be closely monitored by our multi-disciplinary team for any signs of recurrence.

This extraordinary case reflects Melomed Bellville's commitment to excellence in patient care and surgical innovation.