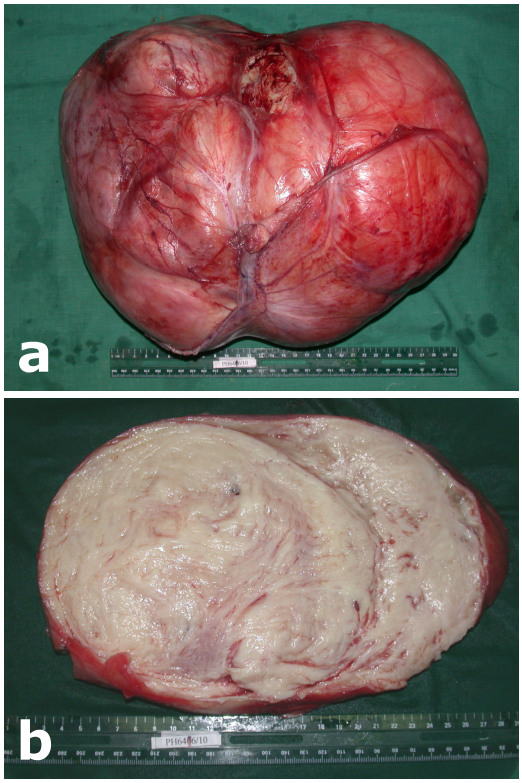
(*Refer to page 36*)

Answer: Massive uterine fibroid

Uterine fibroids (leiomyomas of the uterus) are extremely common, typically measuring 2cm to 5cm in size. Fibroids may be either solitary or multiple, with presenting complaints of subfertility, dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia or pelvic pain. Uterine fibroids are benign tumours that arise from the overgrowth of smooth muscle and connective tissue. Histologically, a monoclonal proliferation of smooth muscle cells gives rise to these tumours, which can be hugely variable in size. Uterine fibroids occur twice as frequently in black women as in either white or Asian women and can occur at any time between menarche and menopause, but are most common in women 35 to 49 years of age. [1] Fibroids typically resolve after menopause. Rarely, uterine fibroids may undergo malignant degeneration to become sarcomatous, but this is the exception. The incidence of malignant degeneration is low and has been estimated to be as low as 0.2%.

The preferred imaging modality is ultrasound, specifically trans-vaginal ultrasound, which allows high resolution images of the uterus to be ascertained. Uterine fibroids are typically classified by their location into submucosal, intramural and subserosal. [2] If exquisite detail is required for treatment planning, such embolisation or myomectomy, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) should be performed.



The patient's fibroid weighed 10.1kg, accounting for approximately 15% of her whole body weight prior to surgery (**Panel a** and **b**). The heaviest recorded fibroid weighed 10.32 kg (22Ib 13oz) which was removed by a team of surgeons at the Suyash Hospital, Indore, India, on 20th January 2007. [3]

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