



Newsletter

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Expert Insight

Cancer vs Care: Health For All

There has been a rapid increase in the incidence of cancer in India as well as globally.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the number of Indians suffering from cancer is projected to increase to 29.8 million in 2025 from 26.7 million in 2021. As a result, cancer care has been gaining traction with a specific focus on early detection and equitable care for all.

World Health Day, with its theme of “Health for All”, encompasses the vision that is required in the field of cancer care and the consequent engagement that is needed to substantiate the seriousness of the cause. The problem of unawareness related to cancer is further aggravated by the lack of proper infrastructure and trained professionals along with the high cost of treatment in India. This makes us understand the subjectivity of how cancer plays out differently for different people. The lowest common denominators including those who cannot afford adequate treatment or those who belong to the rural areas are left out of the picture, largely negating the theme.

The numerous cancer types, heterogeneity of treatments across stages, requirement of various diagnostic tools like cytology, pathology, flow cytometry makes the process of cancer care far more complex, which is why multi sectoral and multidisciplinary care coordination is required.

Partnerships and collaborations between ministries, NGOs, academic sector and the private sector, are required in cancer care. Moreover, best practices across the world can be observed and contextually fitted in India, for instance, the Government of Eswatini employed a program for cancer care and identified capacity building efforts as a major gap in cancer control. Specifically, the need for training at all levels, improvement of pathology services, expansion of physical space for clinics, implementation of supporting infrastructure, access to chemotherapy, and supplies were identified.

Further, there is a substantial inter-state heterogeneity in the age-standardised incidence rate of the different types of cancers in 2016, with a 3.3 times to 11.6 times variation for the four most frequent cancers (lip and oral, breast, lung, and stomach). This heterogeneity in the state-level incidence rate and health loss trends of the different types of cancer in India over this 26-year period should be taken into account to strengthen infrastructure and human resources for cancer prevention and control at both the national and state levels.

The disparity between rural and urban areas is also a significant challenge in the way of cancer care in India. Most developed countries have at least 4 radiation therapy units per one million population, while the World Health Organisation recommends at least 1 radiation therapy unit per one million population. However, India has just 0.53 radiation therapy units per million people. The country falls short of more than 700 units. Most of these are present in urban areas and private institutions. 8 out of every 10 installations of the same are again urban-centric. State Governments are keen on employing a PPP model, wherein the space and physical infrastructure is provided by the government whereas radiation therapy equipment and clinical services are provided by the private operator, treating patients at a mutually agreed price.

Cancer care requires stakeholder engagement and constant employment of new technological techniques. The fear surrounding the disease needs to be removed and for that, it becomes crucial to look at the issue with a logical approach that is also more scientifically advanced. “Health For All” is only possible when treatment becomes inclusive in every form and manner and appropriately captures the fallacies in the status quo.

"Cooperation is the thorough conviction that nobody can get there unless everybody gets there."



Dr. Somnath Singh

Deputy Director, UN Global Compact Network India

Virtual Roundtable discussion on “Vision for Cancer Care in India”

A virtual panel discussion on "Vision for Cancer Care in India" was held on April 12, 2023, to recognise World Health Day. It was organised by the RAPID Global Cancer Alliance in cooperation with the IHW Council.

The discussion was moderated by Ms. Neeraja Reddy, VP-Genetic Counselling, Mapmygenome who was joined by a range of notable experts in the field of cancers. The speakers included Dr. Ratna Devi, CEO and Co-Founder, Director, Patient Academy for Innovation and Research & Chairman, ISPOR Patient Council in Dakshama Health, Dr. Venkata Pradeep Babu Koyyala, Lead Medical Oncology and Principal Coordinator Medical Member Elect Credentialing Committee and Research Cell, Assam Cancer Care Foundation, Mr. Vineet Gupta, Director-Government Affairs at Varian Medical Systems and Dr. Shibu Vijayan, Medical Director, Global Health Practice, Qure AI.

In light of the World Health Day, the need for an effective cancer care system that provides affordable and quality care for all was emphasised as a part of the discussion. Mr. Vineet Gupta opened the discussion by talking about the three pillars of cancer treatment.

The importance of cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment in India to improve cancer care services in the country was highlighted. The need for a collaborative approach towards cancer care was primarily emphasised on and a collective action towards the cause was analysed.

However, it was rightly pointed out, there are still many challenges that need to be overcome. One of the primary challenges is the fragmented nature of cancer care in India, which can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment. This is compounded by the shortage of trained healthcare professionals and inadequate infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.

To look at cancer using such a lens enables us to think about partnerships, collaborations and better stakeholder engagement to visualise a more effective and pragmatic picture in the field of cancer care.



National Developments



Pharma and Medical Device

■ **THEME:** Cancer Prevention

- **UPDATE:** Global Health and Pharma acknowledges Mestastop's potential to transform cancer care worldwide

Key Highlights

- MetaStop has recently been honoured with the prestigious “Best Metastasis R&D Specialists” award by Global Health and Pharma, a UK-based organisation dedicated to enhancing global health and well-being.
- The promising results of a retrospective clinical trial, showing a 100% match in compound rank ordering and observed patient-survival, point to the potential of Mestastop's platform to revolutionise cancer care.
- Mestastop's nomination and subsequent awards are a testament to the company's dedication to making a real difference in the fight against metastatic cancer.

Policy Insight

■ **THEME:** “Health for All”: Inclusivity

- **UPDATE:** HCG EKO Cancer Centre Kolkata takes a step towards inclusivity by offering health services to transgender individuals

Key Highlights

- Invoking inclusivity in the paradigm of healthcare and cancer treatment, this is a welcome step.
- The privilege card comes with a host of benefits, including a screening package, treatment package, and an array of offers and discounts for the transgender community, encouraging them to get themselves screened, stay ahead of cancer, and seek treatment if needed
- The card was first launched in Jharkhand, and the aim is to further extend this card to the PAN India network so that the whole transgender community of India can benefit at large.

Policy Insight

■ **THEME:** Cancer Burden

■ **UPDATE:** 'More Than Two Lakh Cases Of Head And Neck Cancers Reported In India'

Key Highlights

- April is observed as the Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month to sensitise people about these cancers.
- Overall 57.5 percent of global HNCs occur in Asia, especially in India where it accounts for 30 percent of all cancers. Over 2,00,000 cases of HNCs occur each year in India. Consumption of tobacco plus smokers are at high risk for HNC
- Radiation plays a key role in the management of HNCs in both curative and palliative intent. Newer advances in radiation like VMAT, IGRT, SBRT allow normal organ sparing and better functional outcomes like speech and swallowing including better cosmesis and preservation of salivary function.

Policy Insight

■ **THEME:** Cancer Prevention

■ **UPDATE:** The preventable nature of HPV needs to be recognised and acted upon

Key Highlights

- Cervical cancer continues to remain the second biggest cancer affecting women in India and thus preventive vaccination and awareness is crucial to addressing the disease burden.
- It is time for India to address the high disease burden through timely counselling with their doctors about the need for HPV vaccination. By doing so working with doctors and promoting HPV vaccination, India has the potential to take a major step forward towards preventing HPV-related cancers in young and mid-life adults

Pipeline News

■ **THEME:** Cancer Policy

- **UPDATE:** Punjab health department launches oral cancer screening initiatives

Key Highlights

- Oral cancer was the most prevalent in men in the country and according to an estimate, around 49,750 new cases would emerge every year in the country by 2030.
- 80 percent of the cancer cases are detected at the second or third stage when it is difficult to cure cancer, therefore detecting oral cancer at the first stage can definitely prove to be a boon in cancer cure
- Alcohol and tobacco are among the leading causes of oral cancer. She said steps will be taken for timely screening by the participants. Health staff will be trained and general public will be made aware against alcohol and tobacco addiction.

Pipeline News

■ **THEME:** Cancer Treatment

- **UPDATE:** National Cancer Institute will play an important role for a Cancer-Free India

Key Highlights

- The National Institute of Cancer, Nagpur will provide preventive medical treatment and diagnosis of cancer.
- The institute will also work on research and treatment on thalassemia and sickle cell which will benefit the patients of this disease in East Vidarbha.
- Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra stated that efforts will be made to provide advanced systems like proton beam, carbon ion therapy in cancer treatment at cost-effective rates in NCI.

International Developments



Policy Insight

- **THEME:** Cancer Policy
- **UPDATE:** Govt may regulate Insurance plans, riders if costs of cancer care continue to escalate

Key Highlights

- Health Minister of Singapore, Ong Ye Kung said that his ministry is “monitoring cancer drug claims and coverage closely”
- Riders provide higher cancer coverage, their premiums will need to be priced higher. If this results in fewer people buying riders, the problem will be addressed
- Riders are meant to pay the bulk of the patient’s share of the bill not covered by the IP. But to continue offering policyholders almost unlimited coverage for all cancer care, several insurers now offer riders that practically pay any price for cancer treatments, including drugs not on the Cancer Drug List.

Pharma and Medical Device

- **THEME:** Cancer Technology and Collaboration
- **UPDATE:** Samyang and LG Chem partner to develop new mRNA-based cancer therapeutics

Key Highlights

- LG Chem will use the technology for the development of innovative mRNA-based cancer therapeutics with maximised therapeutic efficacy.
- In return, the company will make an upfront payment and a series of milestone-linked payments to Samyang.
- By leveraging the capabilities of the two companies, it is hoped to accelerate the development of innovative cancer therapy to significantly improve the lives of suffering cancer patients.

Pharma and Medical Device

■ **THEME:** Cancer Technology

- **UPDATE:** Belgian biotech Galapagos is testing a device that manufactures CAR-T cancer therapies in hospitals, bringing down the wait time and price.

Key Highlights

- Unlike regular drugs, so-called autologous CAR-T infusions are “living medicines,” custom-made for each patient.
- The aim is to reduce the complexity, time, and ultimately cost of delivering CAR-T treatments to more patients.
- Decentralisation, simplification, and automation of the whole process will reduce the cost of CAR-T significantly.

Policy Insight

■ **THEME:** Cancer Burden

- **UPDATE:** Anticancer Drugs Market Expects To Reach US\$ 335 Bn By 2032

Key Highlights

- Over the past five years (2017-2021), the global market for anticancer medications grew at a CAGR of 7.8%
- In 2021, there were 17.0 million new cancer diagnoses and 9.5 million cancer deaths worldwide, according to Fact.MR data.
- By 2040, it is predicted that there will be 16.3 million cancer-related deaths and 27.5 million new cases worldwide due only to population growth and ageing.
- Due to their effectiveness in treating malignant or cancerous disorders, anticancer medicines have thus demonstrated positive expanding traction over time.

Policy Insight

- **THEME:** Cancer Collaboration
- **UPDATE:** Governor Ron DeSantis announces partnership expansions with Innovative Healthcare Company Insightec to bring state-of-the-art cancer treatment to Florida

Key Highlights

- Insightec utilises ultrasound waves to disrupt the blood-brain barrier, which is being researched to allow drugs used to treat brain tumours to pass through and reach their target at a more effective volume. The technology also allows biopsies to be taken more easily and non-invasively compared to traditional methods
- The partnership with Florida was first announced in 2019 following Governor DeSantis' trip to Israel. Since then, Insightec has placed their technology in five Florida hospitals in collaboration with four Florida universities to advance the research capabilities of these institutions for Alzheimer's research.

Pipeline News

- **THEME:** Cancer Treatment
- **UPDATE:** Healthcare providers turn to AI's predictive powers to augment frontline doctors' capabilities

Key Highlights

- Since the mere variety of cancer has varying degrees of success ranging from 98% to 1%, AI can push for the ability to tailor a chemotherapy programme using the patient's genetics alongside the clinician's best judgement
- AI aligns with the aim of predictive modelling, helping doctors to choose the best course of action for a particular patient in the chemotherapy process, considering that 42% of stage 3 and 4 patients are a part of it
- AI can result in more informed decisions taken by the clinicians and earlier treatments for patients, improving outcomes both immediate and long-term.



**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT IN OUR
EFFORTS IN FIGHT AGAINST CANCER.**

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