

NATIONAL CANCER CONTROL PROGRAMME: CURRENT STATUS & STRATEGIES

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Cancer has become one of the ten leading causes of death in India. It is estimated that there are nearly 2 - 2.5 million cancer cases at any given point of time. Over 7 lakh new cases and 3 lakh deaths occur annually due to cancer. Data from population-based registries under National Cancer Registry Programme indicate that the leading sites of cancer are oral cavity, lungs, oesophagus and stomach amongst men and cervix, breast and oral cavity amongst women. Cancers of oral cavity and lungs in males and cervix and breast in females account for over 50% of all cancer deaths in India. WHO has estimated that 91 per cent of oral cancers in South-East Asia are directly attributable to the use of tobacco and this is the leading cause of oral cavity and lung cancer in India. Summary of results from National Cancer Registry Programme is provided in the box.

National Cancer Control Programme was started in 1975-76. Its **Goals & Objectives** are: -

1. Primary prevention of cancers by health education regarding hazards of tobacco consumption and necessity of genital hygiene for prevention of cervical cancer.
2. Secondary prevention by early detection and diagnosis of cancers, for example, cancer of cervix, breast cancer and the oro-pharyngeal cancer by screening methods and patients' education on self examination methods.
3. Strengthening of existing cancer treatment facilities, which were inadequate.
4. Palliative care in terminal stage cancer.

Existing Schemes under National Cancer Control Programme:

Financial Assistance to Voluntary Organisations: This scheme is meant for IEC activities and early detection of cancer. Under the scheme financial assistance upto Rs.5.00 lakh is provided to the registered

voluntary organisations recommended by the State government for undertaking health education and early detection activities in cancer. A linkage with the Regional Cancer Centre (or Medical College/District Hospital if there is no RCC) is now mandatory by the NGO concerned.

District cancer Control Scheme: It is known that a large number of cancer cases can be prevented with suitable health education and early case detection. Accordingly the scheme for district projects regarding prevention, health education, early detection and pain relief measures was started in 1990-91. Under this scheme one time financial assistance of Rs.15.00 lakh is provided to the concerned State Government for each district project selected under the scheme with a provision of Rs.10.00 lakh every year for the remaining four years of the project period. The project is linked with a Regional Cancer Centre or an institution having good facilities for treatment of cancer patients. The patients are provided treatment at the concerned Regional Cancer Centre or the nodal institution.

Financial assistance for Cobalt unit installation: To strengthen the cancer treatment facilities, the financial assistance of Rs. 1.0 crore for charitable organisations and 1.5 crore for government institutions is provided for procurement of teletherapy, brachytherapy equipments etc. This is one time grant at present. The no. of radiotherapy institutions in various states are given in Table 1.

Development of Oncology Wings in Govt. Medical College Hospitals: This scheme has been initiated to fill up the geographical gaps in the availability of cancer treatment facilities in the country. Central assistance is provided for purchase of equipments, which include a cobalt unit beside other equipments. The civil works and manpower are to be provided by the concerned State Government/Institution. The quantum of central assistance is Rs.2.00 crore per institution under the scheme. The scheme provides one time grant only.

Assistance for Regional Research and Treatment Centres: There are 19 Regional Cancer Research and Treatment Centres recognised by Government of India. A recurring grant of Rs.75 lakhs is being

given to 15 of these RCCs. In addition CNCI, Kolkatta and IRCH, AIIMS are also funded under NCCP.

NEW INITIATIVES

There are some activities, which are carried out under the National cancer control programme out of WHO funding under the biennium pattern. In WHO biennium 1998-1999, 16 workshop/training programmes were organised throughout India. The Pap Smear Kits and Can scan software were supplied to 12 Regional Cancer Centres. Morphine tablets were also supplied to them. In the WHO biennium 2000-2001 following activities were carried out: -

- Outreach activities by medical colleges for increasing awareness and early detection of cancer.
- Training of personnel in early detection and awareness of cancer.
- Supply of Morphine
- Telemedicine and supply of computer hardware and software.
- IEC activities.
- Modified District Cancer Control Programme
- National Cancer Awareness Day
- Training of cytopathologists and cytotechnicians in the quality assurance in Pap Smear technology
- Participation in Health Melas and distribution of health education material
- Postage stamp depicting 'Breast Self Examination' was brought out by Department of Posts on National Cancer Awareness Day
- Telecast of a health magazine 'Kalyani' in the current year with cancer and anti tobacco items under the agreement with Prasar Bharti & MOHFW
- Broadcast of health education audio material developed by CNCI, Kolkatta, through FM Radio

In current biennium 2002-03 the activities are continuing in the similar way. A screening OPD for cancer at Vardhman Mahavir Medical College & Safdarjung Hospital is being planned with WHO assistance.

Modified District Cancer Control Programme

Modified District Cancer Control Programme has been initiated in four states namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu & West Bengal. Sixty Blocks were taken up for this project and 1200 NCD workers, 30 supervisor, doctors, and consultants have been appointed. This was a Survey cum health education drive in which about 12 lakh women in the age group 20-65 years were contacted. Health education about general ailments, cancer prevention and early detection besides 'Breast Self Examination' was imparted. The data collected are being analysed.

National Cancer Awareness Day

Cancer Awareness Day is observed on 7th November. A commemorative stamp on Cancer and first day cover portraying Madame Curie was released at Vigyan Bhawan on this day in 2001. A newspaper advertisement on National Cancer Awareness Day was also released in prominent dailies across the country.

Tenth Plan strategies

As per the recommendations of the working group on National Cancer Control Programme for Tenth Plan, EFC memo has been prepared and submitted to planning commission.

**NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRY PROGRAMME
1981-2001**

- 97.8 (Bangalore) to 121.9 (Delhi) cancer cases per 1,00,000 population in urban males (age adjusted incidence rate)
- 92.2 (Bhopal) to 135.3 (Delhi) cancer cases per 1,00,000 population in urban females (age adjusted incidence rate)
- 46.2 (Barshi) cancer cases per 1,00,000 population in rural males (age adjusted incidence rate)
- 57.7 (Barshi) cancer cases per 1,00,000 population in rural females (age adjusted incidence rate)
- One in about 15 men and one in about 12 women in the urban areas could develop cancer in their lifetime
- Cervical cancer and breast cancer are commonest among females.
- Cancer lung is commonest out of all tobacco related cancers in men
- Age adjusted incidence rate of oesophageal cancer in women of Bangalore is one of the highest (8.3 per 1,00,000) in the world.
- Cancer of tongue in males in bhopal (8.8 per 1,00,000) is the highest in all continents
- Cancer of stomach is one of the main cancer in males in southern registries.
- Gall bladder cancer in Delhi women is one of the highest (8.9 per 1,00,000) in the world.
- 75-80% patients are in advance stage of the disease at the time of first attendance.

Table 1

Statewise Distribution of Radiotherapy Installations as on June 30, 2002

State	Teletherapy				Brachytherapy					No. of Centre
	No. of Centres	Teletherapy Units			Remote Brachy		Manual Brachy			
		Co-60	Cs-137	Linac	LDR	HDR	Intra-cavitary	Interstitial (Ir)		
A.P	22	25	0	2	2	3	13	4	14	
Assam	6	8	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	
Bihar	5	6	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	
Delhi	12	16	1	5*	2	4*	2	2	7	
Goa	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Gujarat	7	12	1	5	1	4	2	2	4	
Haryana	3	6	0	2	1	2	2	1	2	
H.P.	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	
J.K.	3	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	
Karnataka	14	20	1	3	1	3	10	6	11	
Kerala	6	13	1	1	2	1	4	1	4	
M.P.	11	15	0	0	1	2*	1	1	4	
Maharashtra	26	32*	0	6	8	10	14	2	22	
Mizoram	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Orissa	3	5	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	
Pondicherry	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	
Punjab	5	5	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	
Rajasthan	7	10	0	0	1	3	2	1	5	
T.N.	21*	29	0	8	5	4	16	5	18	
U.P.	13	19	0	1	5	2	2	0	6	
W.B.	9	11	5	1	1	2	3	1	3	
Total	178	244	9	37	37	44	76	27	113	

* Indicates change from the previous data

(Source : BARC, Mumbai)

LIST OF REGIONAL CANCER CENTRES

1. Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore (Karnatka)
2. Gujarat Cancer & Research Institute, Ahmedabad (Gujarat)
3. Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh)
4. Cancer Institute, Madras (Tamil Nadu)
5. Regional Cancer Centre, Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)
6. Regional Centre for Cancer Research and Treatment Society, Cuttack (Orissa)
7. Dr.B.B.Cancer Institute, Guwahati (Assam)
8. Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute, Kolkatta (West Bengal)
9. Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital (AIIMS), New Delhi.
10. Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai (Maharashtra)
11. Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, Allahabad (U.P.)
12. MNJ Institute of Oncology, Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)
13. R.S.T.Cancer Hospital, Nagpur (Maharashtra)
14. Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Patna (Bihar)
15. Acharya Harihar Tulsi Das Regional Cancer Centre, Bikaner (Rajasthan)
16. Indira Gandhi Medical College, Shimla (Himachal Pradesh)
17. Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Rohtak (Haryana)
18. Pt. J.N.M. Medical College & RCC, Raipur (Chattisgarh)
19. JIPMER, Pondicherry