

Role of Medical Education in Cancer Control

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Cancer is a major burden for health care sector all over the world. Every year, about 10.1 million new cancer cases are reported worldwide; out of which more than half are from developing world. It is estimated that by 2020, the burden of the cancer in the world will be around 20 million, and 70% of the cases will be from developing world that have only 5% of the resources for the health. This increase in the burden may partly be due to increase in the population size, increase in the life expectancy and control over the non-communicable diseases. In our country, estimated new cases of cancer per year are around 8.00 lakhs. On any given time, our country has a burden of 15 lakh cancer cases. More than 1/3rd of cancer cases are related to tobacco. Unfortunately, majority of the cancer cases (around 70%), are reported in an advanced stage. By the year 2026, we may have around 1.4 million new cancer cases. As a rough estimate, our state of Gujarat registers around 40 thousand new cancer cases every year.

The major components of cancer control are prevention, early detection, optimum treatment, palliative care, education and research. Cancer Education for the professionals and public is considered very important to fight against the misconception about cancer in the society. In a study of perception about prognosis of cancer amongst senior medical students, nurses and GPs, Dr. Eric Easson of the Christi Hospital, Manchester, found that all the groups greatly underestimated curability of cancer. Pessimism about cancer cure was deep rooted and wide spread. Comprehensive curriculum during medical education may solve this problem. India has a great opportunity to prepare its health related human resources competent to address the issue of prevention and control of cancer by developing Oncology Curriculum for medical schools. Such curriculum was published by Cancer Council, Australia, in 1999 and its revised version was published in 2007.

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Under National Cancer Control Program, medical colleges were assisted to develop oncology wings. Many radiation oncology units are set up in medical colleges. In many states, RCC are located nearby Medical colleges. As per Medical Council of India, we are having 462 medical colleges giving admission to 63835 students every year. If all medical colleges are made responsible for cancer care and prevention, it will lead to the most effective National Cancer Program.

Orientation programs for senior under graduate students and interns of medical colleges of Gujarat are organized regularly by Gujarat Cancer Society (GCS) and Gujarat Cancer Research Institute (GCRI).

Cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases are major non communicable disease (NCDs). About two third of burden of diseases and more than half of adult deaths in our country are due to NCDs. The common risk factors contributing to NCDs include harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol, physical inactivity and unhealthy diet. Considering this view point, GCS has developed unique Health Passport to record serial health checkup records along with tips for healthy life style.

On the occasion of its golden jubilee in 2011, GCS entered into the field of medical education by establishing GCS Medical College, Hospital and Research Center, along with school of nursing. First batch of its graduates have entered into the medical profession this year. This was probably the first effort of

Health Passport : Unique System Driven approach to create awareness about health & major diseases



- Preventive approaches to Leading causes of mortality like Hypertension, Diabetes, Obesity & Cancer
- Facilitate early diagnosis
- Use of pictures and simple messages for common men

any cancer organization in our country to start medical college. GCS Medical College has an inherent advantage of being associated with GCRI and it can create a model Oncology Curriculum for medical schools in our country.



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