

Mitra Sandesh

March 1, 2024

I CAN & I WILL

When you first learn that you have cancer, it's normal to feel as if your life is out of control. This is mainly because you wonder how long you are going to live! Your life is totally changed with more visits to doctors and treatment and you don't understand the medical terms. You feel helpless and lonely. There are ways you can take charge and regain control. Learn as much as you can about your cancer and its treatment from your doctor and from your support group. Talk to people who have gone through the treatment, they are the best to tell you what to expect and what not to expect. They will help you understand the ground reality and how to cope with this disease.

“Hope is not just wishful thinking, real hope is built through experience.”

Amar Bhaskar



World Cancer Day 2024 IN CONVERSATION WITH VEER MITRAS

Dr. Jyotsna Rao, PhD Biotechnology
Research Director - iCrest Academy



Pramod Kulkarni
(Colon Cancer Victor)



Dipali
(Breast Fibrodenoma Victor)



Savita Shekhawat
(Breast Cancer Victor)



Somashekar Salimath
(Thyroid Cancer Victor)

The Mitra Cancare programme on the occasion of World Cancer Day involved a panel discussion with the veer mitras who had conquered cancer. Dr. Jyotsana Rao began by introducing the significance of World Cancer Day, which started in February 2000. The theme for this year is Closing the Care Gap. And it was apt to hear from the people who have made the journey through recovery to share their experiences of care and the gaps that exists.

Beginning the panel with the question of how the victors coped with the news of diagnosis and decided their journey thereafter. Ms. Savitha shared about her emotional state. She was a caregiver to

two people with cancer before she was diagnosed. She felt cancer was for the old. She knew she would start screening at age 40. But despite being well educated, and with access to healthcare, it could have gone undiagnosed. She was worried about her family and child, after having seen people die by cancer. As a caregiver we go through emotions differently, but as a survivor it is a different ballgame she mentioned.

Similarly, Mr. Kulkarni shared about being at the opposite end of life. He was having issues since the last two years but no one had diagnosed as cancer. The surgeon explained it was not so serious, and when he saw so many people younger than him and with worse conditions than him waiting for him, he felt lucky compared to them. Mr. Som Shekhar who was always very healthy and fit was taken by surprise when a persistent cough and a lump in the throat got diagnosed as thyroid cancer. His concern was his wife. He chooses to see the silver lining in his struggle and mentions his ability to lose weight during his treatment, something which he couldn't do earlier.

Ms. Dipali knew something was wrong, and felt something not ok with her health, when she got diagnosed. She learned to accept her reality and believes

it is her greatest strength. It made things easier. She could understand her situation and surrender. She listened to motivational talks and was inclined to spirituality and healing support. That was her coping mechanism. She says it is important to have a purpose in life, and have a passion. The little bumps in the road are meant to reroute us towards our purpose, so that we can do our service, helping others along the way.

The cancer victors also shared that the fight against cancer is largely dependent on the mind. 50% of it is based on how you conquer your mind. Knowing a doctor personally is of great help. Being strong for the family so that the family members can in turn support them. So the caregivers also need help and need to be supported.

Regarding the treatment phase, the panelists mentioned that it is good to be connected to another patient who has gone through treatment, it gives hope and courage. Treatment takes a toll on how we feel, how we look. One needs to choose what makes them feel best. Now after going through the treatment and emerging as victors, all of them feel called to support others who are in this phase.

IF YOU FIND THIS MEANINGFUL, DO SHARE IT WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND DO INFORM US OF THEIR E-MAIL ID SO THAT WE CAN ADD THEM TO THE MAILING LIST.



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Mitra Article



FINANCIAL TOXICITY ASSOCIATED WITH CANCER CARE

Dr. Swaroop

MD radiation oncology, DM medical oncology, MRCP SCE
medical oncology

In recent years, advancements in cancer treatment have undoubtedly improved patient outcomes, offering hope and extending lives. However, the flip side of these medical strides is the soaring cost of cancer care, leading to what is now recognized as "financial toxicity." While the physical side effects of chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgery are well-documented, the profound financial strain on patients and their families is often overlooked.

The concept of financial toxicity encompasses the economic burden that cancer treatment imposes on individuals, including out-of-pocket expenses, insurance copayments, lost income due to treatment-related incapacity, and the cost of supportive care services. For patients in lower-middle-income countries such as India, where healthcare systems may be under-resourced and insurance coverage inadequate, the impact of financial toxicity can be particularly devastating.

In India, where a significant portion of the population lives below the poverty line, the cost of cancer treatment can plunge families into financial ruin. Even those with some level of insurance coverage may face significant out-of-pocket expenses, pushing them further into debt. Moreover, the indirect costs of cancer care, such as transportation to treatment centers and accommodations for patients and caregivers, add to the financial burden.

Addressing financial toxicity while maintaining the quality of cancer care requires a multifaceted approach. Firstly, there is a need for increased government investment in healthcare infrastructure and services, particularly in low-resource settings. This includes subsidizing the cost of essential cancer drugs and treatments,

expanding insurance coverage, and providing financial assistance programs for patients in need.

Furthermore, promoting the use of cost-effective treatment modalities and implementing evidence-based guidelines for cancer care can help optimize resource utilization without compromising outcomes. Investing in preventive measures and early detection programs can also reduce the overall burden of cancer care by identifying cases at an earlier, more treatable stage.

Additionally, fostering partnerships between public and private sectors, as well as collaboration with international organizations and NGOs, can leverage resources and expertise to improve access to affordable cancer care. Finally, patient education and empowerment initiatives can help individuals make informed decisions about their treatment options and navigate financial challenges more effectively.

In conclusion, the concept of financial toxicity associated with cancer care is a critical issue that demands attention, particularly in lower-middle-income countries like India. By implementing strategies to reduce the economic burden of treatment while maintaining quality care, we can ensure that cancer patients receive the support they need without sacrificing their financial well-being. Ultimately, addressing financial toxicity is essential for achieving equitable access to cancer care and improving outcomes for patients worldwide.

If you wish to contribute to this news letter, Kindly submit your article to: contact@mitracancare.org



Mitra Sandesh

International Childhood Cancer Day

FEBRUARY 15TH 2024

INTERNATIONAL CHILDHOOD CANCER DAY AT KAPUR CHILDREN BLOCK, DEPARTMENT OF PAEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY, KIDWAI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE OF ONCOLOGY, BENGALURU

International Childhood Cancer Day was celebrated by organizing a magic show for children at the Kapur Children's Block, Department of Pediatric Oncology, Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bengaluru. This day is meant to enhance awareness about childhood cancer in society, and also to encourage all the children undergoing cancer treatment for their successful recovery. This day serves as a crucial reminder that every child regardless of their background deserves a chance to fight and win against cancer.

Having a child with cancer is one of the most painful and difficult situations a family can face. Mitra Cancare Foundation conducted a short programme in joint association with the Department of Pediatric Oncology, Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bengaluru to commensurate International Childhood Cancer Day. The prime focus was engaging and interacting with over 200 children undergoing treatment. The children and their families happily received the giveaway kits distributed by Mitra Cancare Foundation volunteers. This was followed by a programme organized for the children. There was an invocation song and welcome address by Mitra Cancer Foundation. This was followed by an address by Dr. Arun Kumar, HoD Pediatrics Oncology, Kidwai Hospital.

He encouraged all the children and their families to stay strong and complete the treatment. With advancing technologies there was a lot of hope to lead normal lives after treatment. The programme then proceeded to the magic show conducted by Prof. S. Satyamurthy, the fastest Magician of India. It was an enthralling experience for the children and a break for them from their routine days at the ward. Even family members enjoyed and it helped them de-stress. The programme helped to bring back a smile on their faces. Mr. Amar Bhaskar, Founder Director and CEO of Mitra Cancare Foundation, thanked everyone who participated and helped to make the initiative a successful one.



Note

International Childhood Cancer Day



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