

World Cancer Day: Raising Awareness as a Public Health Concern: Short Communication

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ABSTRACT:

The Cancer/Carcinoma (Ca) is a non- communicable disease (NCD) and have serious health condition. The patients of cancer increasing day by day and seen in all age groups and in either gender. In India the increasing cancer cases play a major role in causing illness or death. The high varieties of cancer are mouth cancer, lung cancer, cervical cancer, breast cancer, prostatic cancer, colon cancer, anorectal cancers, etc. Many of the cases diagnosed in late stage which results in life-threatening conditions. If Ca identified in early stage, it significantly improves treatment outcomes. The inadequate knowledge, limited awareness, creates fear in society. Many Government organization and non-Government organisation running cancer awareness programs for society but needs dissemination at the individual and community level. It is the need of time to educate the public about risk factors, warning signs and symptoms, and the significance of timely diagnosis of cancer. To achieve these objective the World Cancer Day is observed annually at international/global level on 4th of February every year. Here author taking an effort to highlight the significance of this observance and to promote cancer awareness in public health concern in context to both Ayurveda and modern prospective.

Key words: Ayurveda, *Arbuda*, Cancer, Carcinoma, *Granthi*, World Cancer Day (WCD).

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Background:

As per Global cancer statistics 2020, report of GLOBOCAN is that about 19.3 million new cancer cases were reported worldwide in 2020^[1]. In India, an estimated 1,461,427 new cases were recorded in 2022, with cancer incidence continuing to rise^[2]. Cancer incidence is expected to rise from 2.8% in 2020 to 12.8% by 2025. The study estimates that cancer will contribute to 29.8 million disability-adjusted life years in India by 2025. This emphasizing the vital necessity of preventive strategies for cancer ^[3]. As per report of the Lancet global cancer burden projected to rise substantially from 2024 to 2050 as diagnoses 60.7% and deaths 74.5%. This underscores that cancer is an urgent public health concern ^[4].

The term “*cancer*” is a Greek word, “*karkinos*,” which means “*crab*,” and includes all malignant tumors that develop in the body. The terms “cancer” and “malignant” are used synonymously. The branch of science dealing with study of cancers are called as Oncology and the person expert in cancer subject is known as Oncologist. The preventive oncology is developing branch in coming years. In cancer (Ca) the cell multiplication becomes uncontrolled and the common categories are carcinoma (arises from epithelial tissue), sarcoma (arises from mesenchymal tissue, connective tissue), lymphoma (arises from lymphatic cells, immune system), and leukemia (arises from blood-forming cells)^[5]. The multiplication of cells throughout life is going on but under control. If the control of multiplying of cells lost and

happen more than require then it’s have dreadful effect on own and other organs. These are actual scenes behind the cancer. Cancer is often curable when identified at an early stage, whereas late or advanced stages are associated with significant discomfort, limited treatment options, and poor survival outcomes and may fatal. Despite major advances in oncology, cancer continues to have a profound and distressing impact on patients, their families, communities, and healthcare professionals. Awareness, health education, early detection, prompt treatment, and effective supportive care offer meaningful benefits for both patients and care providers ^[6].

National Cancer Control Program (NCCP) of India:

The Indian government takes steps time to time and initiated many programs to control the cancer. The National Cancer Control Program of 1975-76 was launched for prevention, early identification (detection and diagnosis) and management. The improvement and change in plan was done time to time in NCCP as per need. The National Institute of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi evaluated the program and again revised it (in 2004-2005) ^[7].

World Cancer Day (WCD):

The WCD established by the Paris Charter in 2000 at article ten to promote cancer research, awareness, prevention, care, and global action against cancer. WCD is coordinated by UICC (Union of International Cancer Control) which is a registered charity in

Geneva, Switzerland. WCD is an international day observed yearly on 4th February to raise awareness in society about cancer prevention, early detection, and early management of cancer, encourage individuals to seek early medical consultation like other health conditions, decrease the death rate, and improve the quality of life of the public. The theme of World Cancer Day 2026 is "United by Unique," which means united in our goals and unique in our needs as in continuation of campaign 2025-2027. This includes real-world experiences, finding the management gaps and implementing the innovative ideas of care suitable and accessible for each person [8]. In India the National Cancer awareness day initiated from 2014 and observed annually on 7th November to publicize regarding cancer awareness in society.

Aetiology and Risk Factors of Cancer

Cancer can occur at any site, at any time in any person. Cancer can arise from multiple contributing factors, including irritation, embryonic influences, genetic mutations, hormonal imbalances, and viral infections. Habits such as smoking *Cigarettes*, *Bidis*, and *Hukka* are linked to lung cancer, while reverse smoking is associated with cancers of the oropharynx. Chronic mechanical irritation, such as from a projecting tooth rubbing against the oral mucosa, also increases risk. Infections caused by viruses, bacteria, and

parasites play a role; for example, Hepatitis B virus infection (liver cancer), and HPV infection (cervical cancer). The alcohol consumption is associated with liver cancer. The use of tobacco through smoking or chewing products like *Zarda*, *Gutkha*, and *Khaini* is connected to cancers of the lung, larynx, pharynx, and oesophagus. Also the inactive lifestyle, high body mass index (BMI), faulty dietary habit, exposure to cancer causing materials, genetic factors, family history and environmental factors (air pollution, ozone layer depletion) are risk factors [9].

Though all above factors are responsible for cancer but many time without any cause cancer may develop.

Characteristics of Cancer

The Cancer is non communicable disease (NCD) with features of abnormal and uncontrolled cell proliferation. The cancer invade locally and spread distally in healthy tissues. Clinical appearances differ depending on the affected organ and the stage of the disease. It typically starts as painless swelling (mass, tumour) in the body. The alarming signs comprises non-healing wounds (ulcers), unusual ulcers or warts (moles), unusual bleeding or discharge, chronic disturbance in bowel habit. The common cancer site are lung, breast, cervix, colon, rectum, prostate etc. The size of tumour (T), involved lymph node (N) and status of metastasis (M) i.e. TNM classification usually describes the extent and severity of Ca. The cancer cells spread to distant organs (like liver, lungs, spine, kidney etc) through blood and lymphatic channels [10].

Diagnosis of Cancer

Cancer diagnosis can be made through detail patient history taking and clinical examinations and relevant investigations. The laboratory tests of blood, body fluids, stool, urine, and specific tumour markers are helpful in making the diagnosis as well as prognosis of cancer. The specific radio diagnostic tests like ultrasonography, computed tomography scan (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), specific endoscopy etc are valuable for detecting Ca and their level of spread. The clinician able to make confirm diagnosis by fine-needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) and biopsy (histopathological examination HPE) of tissues. The common screening tests includes Papanicolaou test or Pap smear for Ca cervix, mammography for Ca breast, PSA (prostate specific antigen) testing for Ca prostate, fecal occult blood testing for intestinal cancer, and per rectal examination for anorectal cancer. Though the confirmation can be made by further applicable investigations [11].

Prevention, Control & Rehabilitation

World cancer day observance and government initiatives under various cancer control programs focus on early detection, prevention, timely management, treatment cost reduction and patient safety. The common public awareness efforts includes self-examinations for breast lumps, recognizing abnormal bowel habits, understanding the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco, and smoking. Publicise the benefits of a high-fibre diet, green leafy vegetables and fruits. Educate the people about the adverse effects of fast

food, excessive spicy diets, and environmental pollutions. Communicate about benefits of right oral and personal hygiene. Also aware about occupational risks faced by industrial workers, exposure to carcinogenic substances, precancerous conditions and their treatment options, workplace safety measures. The prevention is always better than treatment, and early detection with prompt management plays a vital role for better outcome and good quality of life. Also provide rehabilitation, reduce disability along with physical, psychological, and social support for individuals affected by cancer. In advanced stages, when metastasis occurs, management becomes extremely challenging [12, 13].

Management:

The popular treatment methods of cancer are Chemotherapy, Immunotherapy, Hormone therapy, Radiotherapy, Surgical procedures, and combined modality therapy [14]. The selection of specific therapy depends on stage of cancer, type of cancer, location of cancer cells and general health condition of sufferer. Also requests, supportive care, palliative care, pain relief, symptomatic relief, nutritional supports with care of patient anxiety and depression [15].

Ayurvedic Perspective of Cancer:

The clinical likeness of cancers are described in Ayurvedic texts (*Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita*) by name of *Arbuda* (major neoplasm) and *Granthi* (minor neoplasm). The Ayurvedic clinician taking efforts and contributing

in prevention and treatment of cancer patient through public awareness, adaptation of healthy lifestyle, using anti-cancerous herbs (drugs) etc. [16]. Many institutes are working on the drugs that can be control the complications of chemotherapy and radiotherapy with positive outcome. Also providing the palliative care.

Opinions

The key message for everyone is to avoid alcohol and completely stop the use of tobacco in all forms, including smoking (*Cigarettes, Bidis, Hukka*) and smokeless products (*Zarda, Khaini, Gutkha*). Unhealthy dietary practices such as excessive intake of spicy and fast foods should be avoided, while a fibre-rich diet with green leafy vegetables should be encouraged to maintain healthy bowel function. Regular exercise, physical activity, practice of suitable *Yoga, Asanas*, Pranayam, and meditation should be adopted as part of daily life. Individuals should remain alert to any abnormal bodily changes or warning signs and seek medical evaluation from a nearby government hospital or physician if suspicion arises as soon as possible.

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