



Initiating the Battle against Cancer (World Cancer Day Editorial Comment)

Dr. Mayank Gahlot

World Cancer Day is a truly international event that is marked on 4th of February every year, bonding the world's population in the battle against cancer. The primary goal is to protect millions of avoidable fatalities each year by escalating awareness and education about the disease, pushing the governments, concerned authorities and individuals across the globe to take initiatives.¹ World Cancer Day was commenced by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) in order to support and reinforce the goals of the World Cancer Declaration. Approximately, around 8.8 million humans per year die from cancer globally, and out of these, nearly 4 million people die at an untimely age ranging from 30 to 69 years. The estimated incidence of new cancer cases in 2008 was 12.7 million² which is expected to rise to 21.4 million by the year 2030.³ World Cancer Day is an appropriate opportunity to broadcast the message and ignite the profile of cancer in people's minds. To generate result orientation among people and influencing them, every year World cancer day celebration is dedicated to a particular theme. The theme of the World Cancer Day 2016, 2017 and 2018 is "We can. I can."⁴

According to the Global Cancer Statistics, 2012 by Torre LA et al.,⁵ more than 67% of all cancer deaths occur in low and middle-income countries with lung cancer in men and breast cancer among women being the prime causes of cancer deaths in high income nations. Risk factors for cancer include the use of tobacco, detrimental diet, inadequate physical activity and the injurious use of alcohol, but infections such as human papillomavirus, hepatitis B and C, and Helicobacter pylori also cause up to around 18% of the disease burden.⁶ In addition, cancers can also be caused by radiation and a variety of environmental and occupational exposures of varying significance, depending on the specific geographical region and precise cancer site.⁷

Celebrating world cancer day commemorates all the attempts made by the World Health Organisation, the United Nations, various governmental and nongovernmental health organizations towards making the strategy to fight against cancer as well as distributing the real message about this dreadful disease and its treatments modalities including the precautionary measures. Some new strategies, control measure policies and programs are also planned and implemented which help to aware more people in masses about cancer. This event is organized on yearly basis under the direction of Union for International Cancer Control and other paramount organizations involved in the fight against cancer. The involved bodies play major role in organizing the camps, rallies, lectures, seminars and awareness programs. During this event, people are targeted and imparted knowledge about the cancer related risk factors such as tobacco use, alcohol use, transmission of HPV-infection, polluted air, genetic factors, obesity, low fruit and vegetable intake, lack of physical activity and over exposure to sunlight. During this event celebration people are promoted well about healthy lifestyles, balanced diet, regular physical activity and bad impact of alcohol and tobacco habits in order to reduce the risk of occurrence of cancers. People are also made aware about the vaccination methods against the human papilloma virus and hepatitis B virus. A variety of events are organized on this day to make people realize that the persons with cancer should not be treated as separate entities, they should have equal rights to lead a life as any other normal individual in the society. They must be made to feel self-respect and find a normal environment in their home and surroundings.

Just as the deadly cancer affects humans in different ways, all people have the capability to take countless actions to decrease the impact of cancer on individuals, their families and overall

communities.

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MDS (Orthodontics)
Specialist Orthodontist,
307, Block A, Al-Attar Centre,
Karama 116440, Dubai
For contact details, e-mail at:
manuscriptenquiry.ihrij@gmail.com