GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2124
ANSWERED ON 12/03/2025

NATIONAL CANCER GRID

2124. SHRI RAJESH VERMA

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:-

(a) the role of the National Cancer Grid (NCG) in providing cancer care across India, including the number of cancer centres added to the network during the last two years and the proportion of cancer patients treated under the Grid;

(b) the key initiatives undertaken by NCG to improve cancer diagnosis, treatment protocols and research in India;

(c) the objectives and progress of the SEACan Grid established in collaboration with the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office and the manner in which India is contributing to improving cancer control in the region; and

(d) the future plans of the Government to further expand the NCG's reach within India and enhance collaborations under SEACan Grid to strengthen cancer care and control efforts across the South-East Asia region?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND IN THE PMO (DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) NCG has worked towards uniform standards of cancer care, developing trained workforce in oncology and supporting high-quality multi-centric cancer research to develop cost-effective solutions for prevention and treatment of cancer.

There are 362-member organizations in the NCG. In last two years a total of 70 cancer centres have been added to the NCG. Between these centres, a total of 8,00,000 new cancer cases are treated annually. Thus, any initiative of the NCG has potential of massive and far-reaching impact.

(b) The following key initiatives are undertaken by NCG for striving delivery of uniform cancer care to all irrespective their geographical location or socio-economic status.

i. Resource stratified guidelines for management of cancers based on the cost-effectiveness and infrastructure availability.
ii. The guidelines are linked with AB-PMJAY to ensure quality of care delivery to the AB-PMJAY beneficiaries.
iii. Capacity building to conduct health technology assessment to ensure that oncology packages and treatments promote value-based care.
iv. Group negotiation for all the high-value anticancer drugs which resulted in a median of 82% price reduction leading to improvement in access and affordability
v. Standardization of diagnosis by NCG-surgical pathology quality assurance program which helps ensuring correct diagnosis at all the participating centres.
vi. Quality improvement programs which train the centre in improving quality of all the cancer care pathways.
vii. Training of health-care professionals including nurses, pathologists and technicians from across the country to deliver high quality cancer care.
viii. Virtual tumour boards to provide inputs on diagnosis and treatment from a multidisciplinary team of cancer experts for all the complex cancer cases at any of the cancer centers at any location.
ix. Development of interoperable oncology specific electronic medical record solution
x. Establishment of Koita Centre of digital oncology to leverage digital technologies to improve cancer care from prevention to treatment. This is in complete alignment with Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
xi. Integrated data collection & aggregation – a "National Cancer Database to guide all the cancer policies and national cancer control plan. Initial databases established for five common cancers.
xii. Partnering with digital tech companies to deliver cancer care near to patients' home
xiii. Initiation of national tumor tissue biobank across NCG to understand the cancer causation, identification and development of new anticancer treatment and preventive technologies.
xiv. Optimization of treatment of childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia to increase cure rates - the largest trial done till date anywhere in the world.
xv. Repurposing of drugs (aspirin, metformin and curcumin) to provide cost-effective treatment options for common cancers
xvi. Training the early career oncologists in conducting high-quality cancer research. Till date more than 400 oncologists have been trained
xvii. Setting a priority agenda for cancer research and collaborating with ICMR (with joint matched funding) to fund the country-relevant research questions. These include the following:

    1. Reduce burden of patients presenting with advanced disease
    2. Improve access, affordability and outcomes in cancer care via solution-oriented research
    3. Country-level health economic assessment of cancer interventions and technologies
    4. Quality improvement and implementation research
    5. Leverage technology to improve cancer control supported by robust scientific evidence

6. Sharing the best practices with other low-middle income countries through NCG-Vishwam, ASEAN and BIMSTEC and establishment of SEACan Grid

(c) Many of the South-East Asian (SEA) countries face similar challenges in cancer control due to lack of standards for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment and inadequate trained human resources. Given that NCG has addressed many of these through successful initiatives which can be replicated in these countries, NCG with WHO South-East Asia Regional Office has established SEACan Grid. The aim is to initiate virtual tumour boards, sharing of treatment guidelines, imparting training through blended learning, and in-person fellowships.

(d) The NCG plans to co-develop the National Cancer Control program using its strengths and information gained from all the initiatives. There is strong emphasis on using digital technology to address all aspects of cancer care and training. In subsequent years, NCG plan to expand all its initiatives through SEACan Grid to ensure the cancer control in entire South East Asia is achieved optimally.

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