The Management of RGCIRC Wishes You a Healthy, Prosperous & Happy Diwali

- Virtual Childhood Cancer Survivorship Support Group Meeting
- Webinar on Prevention and Management of Lymphedema Post Breast Cancer Treatment - A Multidisciplinary Approach
- Webinar on Oncology with IMA Janakpuri
- Webinar on Oncology with IMA Faridabad
- Virtual Meeting on Management of Genito-Urinary Rhabomyosarcoma
- World Patient Safety Week 2020
- Webinar on Oncology with IMA Faridabad
- Webinar on Oncology with Mera Swaasth Physicians Network, South Delhi
- Covid - 19: Motivational Message
- Welcome to RGCIRC Family
- RGCIRC - Star Employees
- RGCIRC in News
The Department of Pediatric Hematology Oncology, RGCIRC along with its Childhood Cancer Survivors Group “Aashayein” organized its first virtual support group meeting on Sunday, 9th August 2020.

Every year the department organizes childhood cancer survivorship program, with its focus on raising awareness among the childhood cancer survivors and their families about ways to stay healthy after treatment completion. But due to the ongoing pandemic, we were forced to stay apart yet, celebrate from the comfort of our homes.

This year’s meeting agenda was “Staying Safe During COVID – 19 Pandemic & Childhood Cancer Survivorship”. The panel discussion was facilitated by Dr. Gauri Kapoor along with Dr. Sandeep Jain and Dr. Shalini Mishra followed by poem recitation and dance performance by our warriors. Importance of staying physically active especially during lockdown was also portrayed by our survivors.

Team leaders of Aashayein outlined the aim, mission and vision of the group. Our Counselor, Ms. Aayushi Khaneja co-ordinate this activity. The first newsletter of Aashayein was unveiled and it was followed by a surprise video recording from our alumni doctors. Their words of encouragement and best wishes received an overwhelming response from our participants.

Our first virtual support group meeting turned out to be a great success with more than 180 attendees from across the country and few from abroad as well.

Aashayein (Facebook Page)
Aashayein- Childhood Cancer Survivors Support Group of Pediatrics Department, RGCIRRC (Facebook closed group)
@aashayein.rgcirc (Instagram)
aashayein.rgcirc@gmail.com
newsletter.aashayein@gmail.com
Aashayein Rgcirc (Youtube)
WEBINAR ON PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF LYMPHEDEMA POST BREAST CANCER TREATMENT - A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

8th of September is celebrated as World Physiotherapy Day every year to raise the awareness about the significant contribution of the profession in keeping people healthy, mobile and independent. This year, Department of Physiotherapy organised a Webinar on Prevention and Management of Lymphedema Post Breast Cancer Treatment - A Multidisciplinary Approach for the physiotherapy professionals and breast cancer survivors on Tuesday, 8th September 2020 through Zoom Meeting. The session was started by Inaugural speech given by Mr. D. S. Negi, Chief Executive Officer, RGCIRC and opening remarks by Dr. Sudhir Rawal, Medical Director & Chief of Genito Uro-Oncology Services, RGCIRC and Dr. Pinky Yadav, Medical Superintendent, RGCIRC. Dr. D. C. Doval, Chair - Medical Oncology and Chief of Breast & Sarcoma Services, RGCIRC had chaired the session.

Various topics were discussed to enhance multidisciplinary approach to manage lymphedema from surgical oncology, radiation oncology, medical Oncology, Plastic Surgery and rehabilitation perspective by Dr. Garima Daga, Dr. Anjali Pahuja, Dr. Chaturbhuj Agarwal, Dr. Rajan Arora and Dr. Navneet Singh (PT) respectively from RGCIRC. Breast cancer survivors also shared their experience and coping strategies to manage lymphoedema. Overall the meeting was a success and well appreciated by the participants.

WEBINAR ON ONCOLOGY WITH IMA JANAKPURI

RGCIRC organized a webinar in association with IMA Janakpuri on Thursday, 10th September 2020 through Zoom. Dr. Vandana Jain, Consultant - Gynae Oncology delivered a lecture on “Cervical Cancer Screening & Vaccination” in the said virtual meeting. The webinar was very well appreciated by the gathering.

WEBINAR ON ONCOLOGY WITH IMA AYUS, FARIDABAD

RGCIRC organized a webinar in association with IMA Ayus, Faridabad on Friday, 11th September 2020 through Zoom. Dr. Manish Sharma, Consultant - Medical Oncology delivered a lecture on “Approach to a Patient with Cancer” in the said virtual meeting. The webinar was very well appreciated by the gathering.

VIRTUAL MEETING ON MANAGEMENT OF GENITO - URINARY RHABOMYOSARCOMA

Dr. Shalini Mishra from the department of Pediatric Surgical Oncology, RGCIRC, organized the first virtual meeting of the Delhi Association of Pediatric Surgeons on Saturday, 12th September 2020 from 02:00 pm to 04:00 pm. The Zoom meeting was attended by nearly 100 participants from Delhi as well as National IAPS and even members of the PHO (Pediatric Hematology Oncology) group. Since September is observed as Childhood Cancer Awareness month world-wide, the topic for the day was Management of Genitourinary Rhabdomyosarcoma. Eminent speakers disseminated their knowledge on various aspects of the condition which included Prof Sandeep Agarwala from AIIMS, Prof. Sajid Qureshi from Tata Memorial Cancer Institute Mumbai, Dr. Shalini Mishra from RGCIRC and Dr. Kundan Singh Chufal from RGCIRC. There was active virtual interaction from the audience.
After the academic sessions, members of the Childhood Cancer Support Group (Dept. of Pediatric Hematology Oncology, RGCIRC) “AASHAYEIN” interacted with the audience to explain about their wonderful work. They also shared a beautiful dance performance video shot during the pandemic. Overall the meeting was a success and we received excellent feedback and appreciation from the participants.
WORLD PATIENT SAFETY WEEK

A Patient Safety Week was observed at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Center from 15th to 21st September 2020 to realign the awareness of hospital staff on World Patient Safety Day on 17th September 2020. The theme for this year was “Health Worker Safety: A Priority for Patient Safety” and the slogan was “Safe Health Workers. Safe Patients”.

The patient safety week was observed at our hospital by dedicating various activities related to the six International Patients Safety Goals (IPSG) namely:

- Identify patient correctly
- Improve effective communication
- Improve the safety of high alert medications
- Ensure correct-site, correct procedure, correct-patient surgery
- Reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections
- Reduce the risk of patient harm resulting from falls.

A webinar was organized on the World Patient Safety Day, where Directors and consultants participated by giving presentations on various aspects of patient safety. Opening remarks for the webinar were given by CEO and Medical Director.

Apart from daily webinars, competitions for posters, slogans and poems were also held. Daily mailers were sent for virtual webinars between 12:00 pm to 01:00 pm which were followed by compliance rounds and a daily quiz.

WEBINAR ON ONCOLOGY WITH IMA FARIDABAD

RGCIRC organized a webinar in association with IMA Faridabad on Saturday, 19th September 2020 through Zoom. Dr. Amitabh Singh, Consultant - Uro Oncology delivered a lecture on “Robotic Surgery in Uro Oncology” and Dr. Vandana Jain, Consultant - Gynae Oncology spoke on “Role of Robotic Surgery in Gynae Oncology” in the said virtual meeting. The webinar was very well appreciated by the gathering.

WEBINAR ON ONCOLOGY WITH MERA SWAASTH PHYSICIANS NETWORK SOUTH DELHI

RGCIRC organized a webinar in association with Mera Swaasth Physicians Network, South Delhi on Monday, 28th September 2020 through Zoom. Dr. Manish Sharma, Consultant - Medical Oncology delivered a lecture on “Role of Immunotherapy in Cancer Treatment” in the said virtual meeting. The webinar was very well appreciated by the gathering.
"कोविड - 19: पेशेवर तनाव ही नहीं भावनात्मक तनाव से भी गुजर रहे हैं कोरोना चिकित्सक एवं नर्सिंग स्टाफ"

कोरोना वायरस के खिलाफ लड़ाई में अग्रिम मोर्चे पर डरे स्वास्थकर्मी दरीयों को समभालने का चुनौतीपूर्ण कार्य कर ही रहे हैं दूसरी ओर वे एक और लड़ रहे हैं जो है अपनी पेशेवर विशिष्टता या तनाव और भावनात्मक तनाव।

उनको चिता अपने से ज्यादा परिवार और बच्चों की रहती है। एक नरस से जब बात की तो उसके ब्लूज की कर बनने वाली व पैदा होने से सहज तुरंत माह के बच्चो को छुआ तक नहीं है। और अपने घर के एक कमरे में अलग से रहती हैं। जब वो डर मन में आता है तो मेरे हाथ और पैर कॉफ़ लगते हैं और नीद भी नहीं आती है। कई बार चिता होती है की मेरे हाथ व अपने परिवार और कार्यालय के सहकर्मियों को खतरे में राही नहीं"।

जब मैं अपने सहकर्मियों के बारे में सुनती हूँ की उनको कोरोना पीछीट हो गया है तो चिता और बढ़ जाती है। वह यह है हमारे अंदर से निकल पकड़ेगा। आज हर एक के मन में यही सवाल बार बार आता है, और हम इसे दम देते हैं क्योंकि हम पता है की इसका कोई इलाज नहीं है। इस भागती दौड़ती जिन्दगी में अपनाकर लोग इस ब्रेक और कोरोना वायरस के डर ने लोगों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर प्रभाव डालना शुरू कर दिया है। इस बीच चिता, डॉ.विकेटन और अभिविश्वसन का महत्व बन गया है।

कोरोना वायरस से बचाव के लिए पूरे भारत में लोकहाउस है,फिर भी चिकित्सक एवं नर्सिंग स्टाफ बहार काम कर रहे हैं। चिता से हमारे मानसिक एवं शरीर और ज्ञान के बाद कर रहे हैं। जो काम हम करना चाहते हैं वो भी हमारे पास रहे हैं।

इस मानसिक तनाव को नियंत्रित नहीं है कोरोना वायरस से बचाव करके अपने हाथों में रखने वाले हमारे अंदर आया है। जब हम अपने अंतिम लड़ाई के लिए सबको एक मनोवैज्ञानिक और कांटेंसेलर की जरूरत है जो सही मदद कर सकते हैं। इस पेशेवर कार्य के लिए हमारे मानसिक तनाव को अनुभव करते हैं।

मनोवैज्ञानिक और कांटेंसेलर इस महामारी जो,कोरोना वायरस के खिलाफ बचाव काम कर रहे को, जो हमारी मानसिक स्वास्थ्य और मदद कर रहे हैं।

जब भी जीवन में कुछ अकालपन्न होता है जिसकी जानकारी नहीं होती तब वर्तमान में बहुत चिता होती है। जबकि यह बीमारी नहीं है अंदर खत्म नहीं है।

हमारे अनुभव कोरोना से लड़ना है तो अपने मन को मजबूत करना है और अपने दर को निकालना है। तभी इन सारी समस्याओं से बाहर आ सकते हैं, और अपने को मजबूत कर सकते हैं। अब हम को अपना जीवन चक्क बनाना होगा। अब कोरोना से लड़ना है तो हम अपने अंतिम लड़ाई को मजबूत बनाना होगा। जब हम मानसिक रूप से मजबूत हो जाते हम अपने पेशेवर तनाव और मानसिक तनाव को संयम लाएँगे। इसके लिए मजबूत हो जाने के बाद किसी भी नए मनोवैज्ञानिक को लें। अब हम को खुद की देखभाल करना होगा और इस तनाव को दूर करना होगा, सावधानी पूर्वाधिकार रहना होगा तभी इस कोरोना वायरस से बचाव करें अपनी नाती और नहीं।

"समझ गया दिल ये भी अब तो समझाने से
लड़ी जाएँ ये लड़ाई अब आश्वासन से
मिलकर नहीं अलग अलग लड़ना है हमें
में लड़ा अपने तुम लड़ो अपने छिड़काने से
घर मे हो सुरक्षित इसे केंद्र न समझो
मेरे दोस्त कट जायमे ये दिन ते मेरे मुखराने सो।"

डॉ. हर्ष अवाल
(मनोवैज्ञानिक चिकित्सक)
साइको ऑन्कोलोजी विभाग
पंकज वर्मा
(मनोवैज्ञानिक कांसेलर)

राजीव गांधी केंद्र इंस्टिट्यूट एंड रिसर्च सेंटर (आर. जी. सी. एअ. आर. सी.)
WELCOME TO THE RGCIRC FAMILY

July

Dr. Sunil Kumar Puri
Director
Radiology Department

Dr. Mini Mehta
Physician
Palliative Care & Homeopathy

RGCIRC - STAR EMPLOYEES

July

Mr. Neeraj Vats
Senior Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Ms. Jamuna Chhetry
Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Ms. Athira Francis
Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Mr. Birbahadur Singh
P.T.R
Security Department

Mr. Anil Kumar
G.D.A
Housekeeping Department

August

Ms. Anju Mathew
Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Ms. Farheen
Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Mr. Shintu Sebastian
Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Mr. Vishal
Sr. G.D.A
Housekeeping Department

September

Dr. Pragya Shambhawi
Junior Resident
Casualty & Day Care

Ms. Shiny Mol Abraham
Team Leader
Nursing Department

Ms. Anupama
Sr. Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Mr. Tenzin Sangmo
Sr. Staff Nurse
Nursing Department

Ms. Rameshwari
Ward Aaya
Housekeeping Services
INTERVIEW OF DR. RAWAL ON “NEW THERAPIES REVOLUTIONIZING CANCER CARE IN INDIA “ (BUSINESS STANDARD)

New therapies revolutionizing cancer care in India

Dr. Sudhir Kumar Rawal
Medical Director and Chief of Gastro-Entrological Surgery
Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre (RGGIC)

Robotic surgery has transformed the cancer treatment especially for the cancers of prostate and urinary bladder. RGGIC has the distinction of having undertaken maximum number of cancer surgeries through robotics in South Asia.

What about the fear of contracting Covid in the hospitals and hence avoiding treatment?

Super specialty hospitals such as RGGIC are taking all precautions to prevent the spread of infection. St. RGGIC, each person is screened properly and social distancing is maintained.

Moreover the hospital has strengthened the system of tele-consultancy which can help patients could see for consultation sitting at home.

What can he done to improve immunity and fight off Covid-19 better?

Eating a well-balanced diet, avoiding stress, getting enough sleep, maintaining personal hygiene, frequent and proper hand-washing, maintaining social distance and smoking tobacco in all forms can help improve immunity.

Dr. (Prof) Sudhir Kumar Rawal
Medical Director and Chief of Gastro-Entrological Surgery
Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre (RGGIC)
Bawal, Delhi
RGCIRC launches drive to raise awareness about Sarcoma cancer

Sarcoma is a rare kind of cancer. Sarcomas are different from the much more common carcinomas because they happen in a different kind of tissue. Sarcomas grow in connective tissue -- cells that connect or support other kinds of tissue in your body. These tumors are most common in the bones, muscles, tendons, cartilage, nerves, and blood vessels of your inner body and legs, but they can also happen in other areas of your body.

In NCR, another major issue is that not many hospitals have sarcoma management teams, which comprises of dedicated pediatric medical oncologists, surgeons, pathologists, radiation oncologists and rehabilitation services.

Talking about prevention, Dr. Pruthi says, prevention doesn’t play a role here, as there are no significant risk factors. So, what is important is early and correct diagnosis. One should not ignore the persistent pain or increasing swelling in limbs, which is not responding to conservative treatment. As usually there is some history of Injury, many of the times parents/child can indicate the persistent pain to injury sometime back.

It’s not that every tumor lump is cancerous; it could be an infection or a benign tumor. Sarcoma is a rare condition to have. Emphasis should be given on not ignoring increasing swelling or pain in limbs especially in young adults, as it could be sarcoma. Be aware, create awareness, diagnose sarcoma early. Dr. Pruthi winds up.
INTERVIEW OF DR. NITIN BANSAL ON HOW DOCTORS ARE DEALING WITH VIRUS

HEALTH & WELLNESS

As doctors continue to fight against the pandemic as frontline warriors, The Daily Guardian talks to some of them to know how they are maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

HIGHLY FULFILLING TO SERVE THE NATION AT THIS TIME

Dr Shubhraj Dixit

Life has become an emergency drill. Being a doctor at a full-hopped Covid-19 hospital, my life revolves around emergencies. Though it’s highly fulfilling to serve our nation at this time of need, at times we also crave for a normal life. I go to the hospital hand in hand with my patients, they come home and scrub myself while taking a shower. The intensity is probably higher than ever. I diligently do three days a week in the morning and rest of the time I plan for myself or my family. As a doctor, we have been trained well so that I hope the pandemic will recede.

Dr Rajiv Dutta

Duty at the hospital has become more challenging than pre-Covid times as there are strict protocols to adhere to for our safety. This was never the case before as we used to always be concerned for patients’ safety. Wearing PPE for long hours means no food or water or even rest breaks but it’s necessary. The fear of contracting the infection exists but we cannot allow our fears to overpower our will. We are certainly worried about our families, especially those with elderly parents or kids at home. But understanding what our nature of work entails we support each other. Being around them does bring a sense of normality in our lives. Dr Dutta is a consultant, internal medicine at Indus Spiral, Sujanpur, Delhi.

CANT ALLOW FEARS TO OVERPOWER OUR WILL

Dr Tanya Prashin

Covid-19 has forced us to re-strategise our lives, a proper structure and discipline are the key. This means we have to re-engage in our lives. Due to this, we found that meditation has been largely beneficial as it keeps us fit and maintains our mental resilience. I am mainly working from home as online consultation is the new thing. Making conscious efforts towards steering stress off is helping me to strike a balance. In the evenings, I make virtual social engagements such as calling friends, organizing online games or watching live concerts.

Dr Shubhraj Dixit

Although I have seen the worst in times of pandemics, there is no better stress buster than to see a patient improve and get discharged from the hospital.

Dr Tanya Prashin

I believe that everything has a purpose and my existence post from my family and the hospital has helped me maintain a sound balance. The fact that you are not alone and have a supporting infrastructure helps you overcome the challenges.

The Daily Guardian is a highly factual and credible source that covers a wide range of topics, from health to politics to entertainment. It is published on a regular basis and is available in both print and digital formats. The Daily Guardian is a great source of information for anyone looking to stay informed about the latest news and events in India and around the world.

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MEDIA COVERAGE ON CHILDHOOD CANCER

Dainik Jagran | 23 Sept 2020

Bचों में कैंसर के 70 प्रतिशत मामलों का इलाज संभव : डॉ. गोरी कपूर

अनुनद जागरण

राष्ट्रीय मित्रता के श्रेष्ठ मुख्य सचिव डॉ. गोरी कपूर ने कैंसर के इलाज में के अधिकतम क्षमता को दर्शाया। वे बताते हैं कि कैंसर के इलाज में सुधार हेतु के लिए सीखने और उपयोगी उपायों का अल्पमान आता है।

उन्होंने कहा कि बच्चों में कैंसर का इलाज संभव है। एक अध्ययन के अनुसार, यदि रोगी की बुखार के अवसर पर उपचार किया जाता है, तो वे अच्छे स्वास्थ्य में रह सकते हैं।

Navodaya Times | 23 Sept 2020

कैंसर के बच्चों में बांटा है तो बच्चों को जब फुट से बचायें: डॉ. गोरी कपूर

नवदया टाइम्स

नवदया टाइम्स ने अपने स्थायी मामले में बच्चों के कैंसर के आधार पर आवश्यकताओं के अनुसार अपने अनुभव में भाग लिया है। उन्होंने कहा कि बच्चों के कैंसर के इलाज में सुधार हेतु के लिए उपचार का उपयोग किया जाना चाहिए।

Pioneer | 22 Sept 2020

यार्यनियार

यार्यनियार ने अपनी दस्तावेजी में बच्चों के कैंसर के इलाज में सुधार हेतु के लिए उपचार का उपयोग किया जाना चाहिए। उन्होंने कहा कि बच्चों के कैंसर के इलाज में सुधार हेतु के लिए उपचार का उपयोग किया जाना चाहिए।
Hospital highlights higher COVID-19 fatality rate in cancer patients

IANS 2 days ago

A study conducted by the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre here has highlighted the high rate of COVID-19 infection in cancer patients and also revealed that the fatality rate in such patients is 7.6 times more than the national average fatality rate for COVID-19.

Public health experts postulate that the severity and resulting mortality in cancer patients with COVID-19 is amplified due to their elderly and immunocompromised state which is further worsened by cancer treatment.

“Our study highlights the incredibly high rates of COVID-19 in cancer patients. More distressingly, the CFR is 7.6 times more than the national average CFR for COVID-19,” six researchers from the Delhi-based cancer hospital noted, after conducting a study on 186 active cancer patients with confirmed infection between June 8 and August 20.

Dr Vineet Talwar, Director of Medical Oncology at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, said that this is the first study to show the case fatality rate and its clinical association in Covid-19 infected cancer patients.

A total of 3,101 cancer patients were treated at the indoor facility of the centre. 1,088 patients had developed signs and symptoms suspicious of Covid-19. Of these, 186 tested positive for COVID-19 and formed the study cohort. The infection rate among all cancer patients treated at the centre was 6 per cent.

Besides this, the Covid-associated fatality rate in the cohort was 14.5 per cent as against the national average of 1.96 per cent, i.e. 27 out of 186 patients succumbed to the disease.

"Although the incidence and CFR was 14.5 per cent against the national average in this study, this can be ascribed to patient factors, visitations and admission in health care facilities with high risk of contracting infection. This was also seen in the New York hospital system with CFR of 28 per cent," Dr Talwar told IANS.

Cardiovascular diseases and diabetes posed a higher risk of death in this cohort. Co-morbid conditions like diabetes frequently co-occur with hypertension or coronary artery disease in cancer patients and can further weaken the immune response escalating the risk of death due to Covid-19.

Most cancer patients with coronavirus disease had solid malignancies (82.3 per cent); gastrointestinal cancer (21.5 per cent) was the common cancer type in such patients. About 17.7 per cent of cases presented with hematological malignancies, cancers that affect the blood, bone marrow, and lymph nodes.

More than a quarter of cases (26.9 per cent) were metastatic. Eighty-six patients (46.2 per cent) presented at least a single co-morbidity -- hypertension (24.2 per cent) and diabetes (18.3 per cent) were most common.

About 60 per cent of cases were on active cancer treatment and had received cancer-directed treatment within a month before the onset of COVID-19 symptoms. Thirty-seven per cent of patients were on chemotherapy. No significant effect on mortality was noted in the patients who had received anti-cancer therapy in the past month.

The doctors of the tertiary cancer care centre managed Covid-infected cancer cases by treatments including corticosteroids, hydroxychloroquine, remdesivir, tocilizumab and convalescent plasma therapy.

According to the study, assisted ventilation had to be given to 12 patients (6.4 per cent), however, all of them eventually developed COVID-related complications like pneumonitis and associated respiratory failure, septic shock or sudden cardiac arrest and succumbed to the disease.

Two recent studies from the European continent have shown a far greater case fatality rate in cancer patients with Covid-19. In the United Kingdom’s Coronavirus Cancer Monitoring Project, a case fatality rate of 30.8 per cent was observed. Similarly, high rates were noticed in the New York hospital system where a rate of 28 per cent was observed.

"Relatively, lower case fatality rate in the present study when contextualised to CFR in the general population shows the similar proportion to those observed elsewhere. This study once again establishes the far higher CFR in cancer patients with COVID-19," the researchers said.
Delhi hospital highlights higher Covid fatality rate in cancer patients

Last Updated: Sat, Sep 19th, 2020, 18:27:19hrs

Public health experts postulate that the severity and resulting mortality in cancer patients with COVID-19 is amplified due to their elderly and immunocompromised state which is further worsened by cancer treatment.

"Our study highlights the incredibly high rates of COVID-19 in cancer patients. More distressingly, the CFR is 7.6 times more than the national average CFR for COVID-19," six researchers from the Delhi-based cancer hospital noted, after conducting a study on 186 active cancer patients with confirmed infection between June 8 and August 20.

Dr Vineet Talwar, Director of Medical Oncology at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, said that this is the first study to show the case fatality rate and its clinical association in Covid-19 infected cancer patients.

A total of 3,101 cancer patients were treated at the indoor facility of the centre. 1,088 patients had developed signs and symptoms suspicious of Covid-19. Of these, 186 tested positive for COVID-19 and formed the study cohort. The infection rate among all cancer patients treated at the centre was 8 per cent.

Besides this, the Covid-associated fatality rate in the cohort was 14.5 per cent as against the national average of 1.96 per cent, i.e. 27 out of 186 patients succumbed to the disease.

"Although the incidence and CFR was 14.5 per cent against the national average in this study, this can be ascribed to patient factors, visitations and admission in health care facilities with high risk of contracting infection. This was also seen in the New York hospital system with CFR of 28 per cent," Dr Talwar told IANS.

Cardiovascular diseases and diabetes posed a higher risk of death in this cohort. Co-morbid conditions like diabetes frequently co-occur with hypertension or coronary artery disease in cancer patients and can further weaken the immune response escalating the risk of death due to Covid-19.

Most cancer patients with coronavirus disease had solid malignancies (82.3 per cent); gastrointestinal cancer (21.5 per cent) was the common cancer type in such patients. About 17.7 per cent of cases presented with hematological malignancies, cancers that affect the blood, bone marrow, and lymph nodes.

More than a quarter of cases (26.9 per cent) were metastatic. Eighty-six patients (46.2 per cent) presented at least a single co-morbidity -- hypertension (24.2 per cent) and diabetes (18.3 per cent) were most common.

About 60 per cent of cases were on active cancer treatment and had received cancer-directed treatment within a month before the onset of COVID-19 symptoms. Thirty-seven per cent of patients were on chemotherapy. No significant effect on mortality was noted in the patients who had received anti-cancer therapy in the past month.

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