



NewsLetter

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EDITORIAL

HAPPY NEW YEAR: DO SOMETHING NEW!

Each of us must have a drive in life. Something that drives or motivates you is a goal. Goals don't have to be set in stone, but you must have them. This is how I look at the sixth decade of my life. The decade in which we learn from our last decade of mistakes and then make new ones. Tied with our personal achievements and self-independence, we can set the tone for the future and actually make a change. Let that be our master goal. Years ago, you probably set up a retirement plan hoping to get early retirement. Are you still on track to that old goal you once set? Do you need to re-evaluate these goals and set up a new plan? Use the time you have to focus on family and friendships. Start making it a goal to build stronger relationships with your friends and family. You have free time to explore your hobbies and interests like never before. Start a charity or new business. Get into that hobby you never had time for. It is never a good idea to avoid what you are passionate about. Spending time with yourself is important, as is taking time to do what you like. For example, set a goal to read one book a month, or learn to paint, or take up a yoga practice. The choice is truly yours, and science proves that having a schedule and sticking to it keeps you healthy and happy. Get a schedule going, and don't neglect your health just because you hit retirement. The sad thing is that some people become very sedentary at this age and gain a lot of weight. You have the time now to do more. Make new goals that combine exercise and a healthy diet. Being sedentary only cuts down your life expectancy.

But can goals change over time? Is it good if they change? You might have dreamed of becoming a top CEO, but at some point, you might notice that you are gravitating toward easier positions that fit your skills and personality better. And that's completely fine! Goals can definitely change over time and you are free to change them whenever you like. Sometimes you just realize that what once seemed like a great career or lifestyle for you simply doesn't interest you anymore. That's perfectly normal and it doesn't mean that you are weak or don't have what it takes. It's best to spend your time on something you know is for you.

Research suggests that the goals tend to change with age. This is not surprising. Many young people dream of fame and fortune, but a few years later they often start dreaming of having a peaceful, comfortable life instead. Your goal and dreams reflect your values and what you think you are capable of achieving. That's why it's natural that they change over time. People are often disappointed when they don't see results right away. It is only those people who stick to their goals and keep going even when they don't see any immediate results, that will see their goals come true.

You have to think about what you really want from life. As time passes, you are bound to change a lot and at the same time, your values and principles change too. Sometimes you simply find something better and then it definitely makes all the sense to spend your time working on your new goal instead of sticking to the old one just because you've spent so much time on it already. If you have been working on your goal for a while now and you're

not seeing much (or any) progress, you might feel like it's best to just give up. The bigger the goal, the harder it is to reach. That means that running into obstacles is completely normal. And just because you're not seeing any progress right now doesn't mean that you couldn't succeed over time. Don't quit just because it hasn't worked out yet. Keep in mind that most things in life aren't guaranteed and increasing your odds is what will help you succeed.

But you shouldn't change your goals too often. If you do that, you will never get anywhere. Later life poses a variety of challenges to individuals' capacity for control and for attaining desired goals. Many of these challenges result from losses in cognitive and physical abilities, reduced financial resources, and relative social marginalization in advanced age. Although age-related changes encompass gains and losses throughout the entire life span, the ratio of losses to gains increases in old age. Prominent instances of losses are rooted in biological aging and decreasing social influence due to retirement, and pose unique challenges. One way to respond to these challenges is by directing efforts toward their most valued and at the same time feasible goals. Older people may have to downscale their aspiration levels and eventually may have to give up some of their personal developmental goals altogether.

Let me narrate my own story. I joined RGCIRC IN 1996 as a consultant, it feels like I've been chasing everything in life. Someone has rightly said "अजीब सौदागर है, ये वक्त भी.. जवानी का लालच देकर, बचपन ले गया..और अमीरी का लालच देकर जवानी ले गया". It is a period that defined my entire life. To be honest, I didn't stop to think about reaching the end of my 60s until now. I was elevated to the post of Medical Director, RGCIRC.



To be continued on 4th page

UPDATED REVIEW ON HEAD AND NECK CANCER: INDIAN SCENARIO

Head and Neck Cancer (HNC) is very common in India and originates from squamous cells located in the mucosal epithelium inside the head and neck, including tumors of the oral cavity, nasopharynx, oropharynx, hypopharynx and larynx.

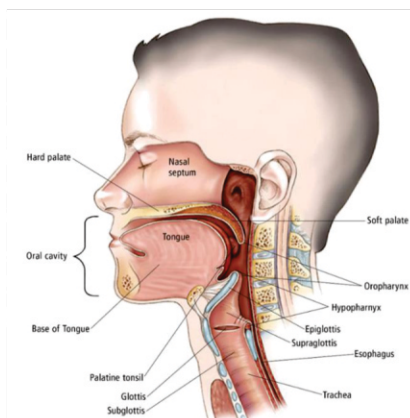


Figure 1: Illustration of the head and neck. Copyright 2005-2011 ASCO. Robert Morreale / Visual Explanations

Symptoms:

HNC can manifest with various symptoms depending on the location and stage of the cancer. Some common signs and symptoms include swelling or lumps, pain, difficulty swallowing, changes in Voice, persistent sore throat, ear pain, difficulty breathing, unexplained weight loss, bleeding, and numbness

The incidence of HNC in India:

In India, the number of cancer cases is rising. According to GLOBOCAN 2020, there will be 2.1 million new cancer cases in India by 2040, an increase of 57.5% from the year 2020.

The all-site cancer incidence rate was 103.7 and 102.4 per 100,000 population for males and females, respectively. (Ref: e-Cancer, 2023)

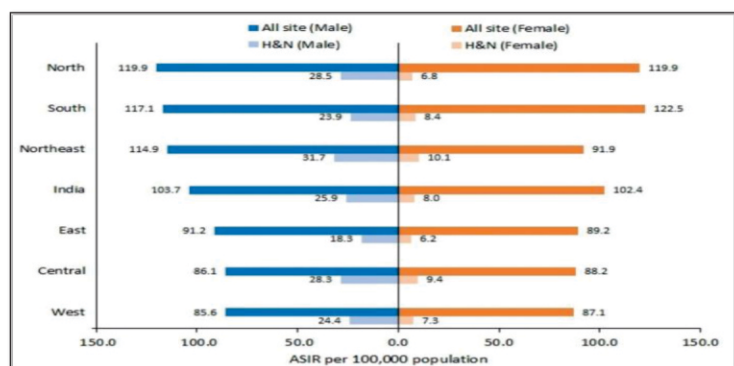


Figure 2 Ref: Head and neck cancer burden in India: an analysis from published data of 37 population-based cancer registries, 2023

The ASIR (Age-Standardized Incidence Rate) for HNC was 25.9 (95% CI 25.7-26.1) and 8.0 (95% CI 7.9-8.1) per 100,000 population for males and females, respectively. The burden of HNC as compared to all-site cancer is mentioned Figure 2.

Risk Factors:

India has the highest number of oral cavity cancer patients in the world. This could be related to the widespread use of tobacco in India. Tobacco use has been identified as a risk factor in 80 to 90% of patients with oral cancer.

Tobacco use in India is characterized by a high prevalence of combustible (in the form of smoking) and smokeless tobacco use, with dual use also contributing a noticeable proportion.

Challenges in Diagnosis:

One of the significant challenges in combating HNC in India is the late presentation of cases. Due to a lack of awareness, limited access to healthcare facilities in remote regions, and sociocultural beliefs, patients often seek medical help at advanced stages of the disease, reducing treatment options and chances of successful outcomes.

Prevention:

- Avoiding consumption of tobacco (in any form) and alcohol is the best strategy for oral and head & neck cancer prevention.
- Maintenance of good oral hygiene
- Also, the HPV vaccine is now available that helps in the prevention of HPV-associate oropharyngeal cancer.

Survival Rates of HNC:

According to the National Cancer Institute, the five-year survival rates for oral cavity and pharynx cancers are as follows:

- 83 percent, for localized cancer
- 64 percent, for cancer that's spread to nearby lymph nodes
- Overall, 60 percent of all people with oral cancer will survive for five years or more. The earlier the stage at diagnosis, the higher the chance of survival after treatment.

Treatment Modalities:

Treatment for head and neck cancer typically involves a multidisciplinary approach, including

- Surgery
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- In recent years, advancements in medical technology have led to targeted therapies and immunotherapy
- A study in India has found that an ultra-low dose of the immunotherapy drug nivolumab helped people with advanced head and neck cancer live longer
- Proton therapy can be added to a treatment plan to reduce the damage done to healthy tissue

Recent Updates:

De-escalation in HPV-Associated HNC: Updated results from the Quarterback trial, resented at ASCO 2023, showed that response to induction chemotherapy may be a reasonable way to select patients for dose-reduced chemoradiotherapy, but further randomized studies are needed to evaluate this approach.

Conclusion:

- Head and neck cancer continues to be a significant health concern in India,
- Addressing the risk factors through preventive measures, early detection, and ensuring access to quality healthcare services are pivotal in reducing the burden of this disease.

Dr. Rajat Saha

Sr. Consultant & Unit Head - Medical Oncology
RGCIRC, Delhi

CME, AMRITSAR, PUNJAB



CME Programme was organized by RGCIRC in association with Nayyar Hospital, Amritsar, Punjab on Saturday, 02nd December 2023 at Hotel Radisson Blu, Amritsar, Punjab. Dr. Vaishali Zamre, Sr. Consultant & Chief of Breast Surgical Oncology, RGCIRC delivered a lecture on **Roadblocks in Breast Conservation Surgery for Breast Cancer** and Dr. Jaskaran Singh Sethi, Sr. Consultant & Chief of GI, HPB & Pediatric Radiation Oncology Services, RGCIRC spoke on **Radiotherapy – “Energy at Work”**.

THE MIDCON 2023 BY IMA SOUTH DELHI BRANCH

RGCIRC participated in autumn academic event, **THE MIDCON 2023** organized by IMA South Delhi Branch on Sunday, 03rd December 2023 at Scope Convention Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. Dr. Sandeep Jain, Sr. Consultant - Paediatric Hemato Oncology & BMT, RGCIRC delivered a lecture on **Don't Miss Childhood Cancer – What To Do** and Dr. Kapil Goyal, Consultant – Medical Oncology, RGCIRC, Niti Bagh, South Delhi spoke on **Essentials of Cancer Breast for Physicians & Surgeons**.



WELCOME TO RGCIRC FAMILY



Dr. Rajat Saha has joined as Sr. Consultant & Unit Head, Medical Oncology. He is an alumnus of the prestigious Grant Medical College, Mumbai. He completed his DNB (Medical Oncology) from this very institute – Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre. He has more than 15 years' experience in the field of medical oncology with proficiency in chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy administration. He has keen interest in clinical Research and teaching.

His areas of expertise include Head & Neck Cancer, Brain Tumour, Molecular Oncology, Geriatric Cancer & Breast Cancer.

He is Member of Indian Society of Medical & Paediatric Oncology. European Society of Medical oncology & Oncology Forum. Known as a compassionate doctor by colleagues and patients alike, he likes to give personalized and holistic attention to each case.

WELCOME TO RGCIRC FAMILY



Dr. Shubham Jain has joined as Sr. Consultant - Surgical Oncology, RGCIRC, Niti Bagh, South Delhi. He is an alumnus of the prestigious Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi. He completed MCh (Surgical Oncology) from the prestigious Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, and MS (General Surgery) from Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi.

His clinical interests span breast oncology, thoracic oncology, head & neck and thyroid oncology, GI & colorectal oncology, skeletal, soft tissue and retroperitoneal sarcomas, skin cancers & melanomas and vascular access. He is proficient in robotic and advanced minimal access surgeries for cancer as well as HIPEC/PIPAC procedure for peritoneal surface malignancies.

Dr. Shubham Jain's dedication to advancing the field of Surgical Oncology is evident in his membership in professional organizations, such as the Association of Surgeons of India, Association of Minimal Access Surgeons of India, Indian Association of Surgical Oncology, Oncology Forum, and European Society of Surgical Oncology, among others.

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EDITORIAL

Today I am Director - Surgical Oncology, RGCIRC. Was 'it pure destiny or the result of changing goals with time and age. May be the path I am trying to take is somehow clear to me on the professional level, but what is it on the personal level. I guess many people of my age and in my position may feel the same. After all, I have a steady job and an amazing team. The organization I work for is growing rapidly. Think going into a new decade of life, will it change anything significantly. But whatever your age, let's be frank and admit that nothing actually changes because you are a year older. Goals are what drive us in life. These are what keep me energetic and focused all the time. Everyone should have goals for career and goals for personal life -- even goals for social life. If you aspire to achieve something, you will find the way. While you may not always succeed in achieving the goals you set, I believe having them is a crucial part of your growth and success.

To decide what goals you set, think about the next step in your professional journey. What small (or big) mountaintop do you want to reach next? Is it a new position? A bigger project? Increased compensation? A wider professional circle? Or may be enrichment through education?. Try to set goals that will help you grow and progress, but at the same time, be realistic, and don't imagine goals that are out of your reach. That way, you help yourself constantly grow. To start, try to set one small goal. Something simple but meaningful. Achieving that small goal will help you move on to the next bigger one. If you fail, don't be discouraged -- analyze what went wrong. Did you overestimate your abilities? Did you lack in performance? Could you work harder to achieve your goal?

Step out of your comfort zone and try something new. Psychologists say when you step out of your comfort zone, you are giving yourself more chances to learn and develop better skills. Feeling uncomfortable is not a bad thing; it often signifies growth. Continue to set goals!!.



Dr. A. K. Dewan
Director - Surgical Oncology, RGCIRC, Delhi

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(Medical Director)
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To:

If undelivered please return to:
Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and
Research Centre, D-18, Sector - 5,
Rohini, Delhi - 110085

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Editor: Dr. A. K. Dewan