

EDITORIAL

WORLD HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE DAY 2025

“ACHIEVING THE PROMISE: UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PALLIATIVE CARE”



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TO PALLIATIVE CARE**

11 OCTOBER 2025

**WORLD HOSPICE AND
PALLIATIVE CARE DAY**

This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of World Hospice & Palliative Care Day. What started as 'Voices for Hospice' concerts around the world turned into a day to recognise hospice and palliative care starting in 2005. Having a day each year to recognise the importance of hospice and palliative care is a valuable part of every health care movement and is essential for advocacy and awareness raising.

Why do we need WHPCD? Palliative Care is a major unmet need across the world. Only 14% of the over 73 million adults and children in need of palliative care services receive it. Approximately 20 million people die every year in pain and suffering due to a lack of access to palliative care and pain relief. Palliative care development should follow the public health model developed by the WHO that emphasises policy, education, medication availability, community empowerment, research, and implementation. Palliative care is fundamental to improving the quality of life, well-being, comfort, and human dignity for individuals and is an effective person-centred health service that values patient's needs to receive accurate, personal and culturally sensitive information on health status.

World Palliative Care Day is organised by the Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance each second Saturday in October, this year on **11 October 2025**, on behalf of the global palliative care community, including international, national, and regional palliative care organisations.

Each year, a different theme is chosen to highlight a specific aspect of palliative care or to challenge myths or misconceptions about palliative care. Last year was the 10th anniversary of the passage of the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution on palliative care, and the theme *Ten Years Since the Resolution: How are we doing?* was an opportunity to look at how much or how little progress was made in the decade. This year's theme, **Achieving the**

Promise: Universal Access to Palliative Care, builds on last year's to explore what is needed in the coming 5-10 years to build toward universal access to palliative care, especially as part of universal health coverage.

The subthemes this year are:

1. **Empowering** people and compassionate communities
2. **Implement** palliative care policies to improve access
3. **Integrate** palliative care fully into healthcare systems through UHC

According to the World Health Organization, integrating palliative care into UHC ensures continuity of care, improves patient satisfaction, and reduces unnecessary hospitalisations and costs. Health systems with integrated palliative care reduce intensive care use at the end of life, promoting both patient dignity and cost-effective care. Furthermore, integrating palliative care into healthcare systems is integral to the achievement of **Universal Health Coverage** (UHC), including financial risk protection.

The world and key stakeholders need to realise the urgent need to include palliation across the continuum of care, especially at the primary care level, recognising that inadequate integration of palliative care into health and social care systems is a major contributing factor to the lack of equitable access to such care.

Everyone deserves the best care possible, regardless of who they are or where they live in the world. Palliative care is yet to be fully integrated into the healthcare system of most countries, especially the low and middle-income countries (LMICs). While most of the need for palliative care is being met in high-income countries, only about 4% of the need is being met in LMICs.

This year, our KEY ASK is **Full Integration of Palliative Care into Health Systems in the Next Five Years**. Don't let palliative care progress fall behind. Ensure that the palliative care resolution is effectively realised over the next decade. Demand that governments include palliative care and relief of suffering in their plans for universal health coverage.

Dr. A. K. Dewan
Director - Surgical Oncology

MY WHY: SAVING BREASTS, SAVING LIVES



Every October, the world turns pink to reaffirm our commitment to the fight against breast cancer. This year, the theme “My Why” invites each of us to reflect on our motivation—why we choose to speak up, to act, and to care.

As a breast cancer surgeon, my why stems from the stories I witness every day—stories of courage, resilience, and hope. Each patient reminds me that early detection not only saves lives but also preserves a woman’s identity, confidence, and sense of self.

I’ve seen fear turn into faith, and despair transform into determination. Those moments are my reason—my why—to keep spreading awareness, one patient, one story at a time.

The Growing Burden in India

Breast cancer has now become the most common cancer among Indian women, surpassing cervical cancer. According to the National Cancer Registry, nearly **one in 28 women** is likely to develop breast cancer during her lifetime.

Yet, what’s more alarming is when we find it. Nearly **60% of Indian women are diagnosed in advanced stages**, often when the disease has already spread. The reasons are complex—lack of awareness, fear, limited access to screening, and cultural stigma that still makes discussions around breast health uncomfortable.

“I thought it was just a milk lump,” said a 42-year-old mother of two who ignored a lump for months. By the time she walked into the hospital, the disease had advanced. Her story isn’t unique—it’s painfully common.

Early Detection: The Game Changer

The good news? Breast cancer is highly curable when detected early. Awareness, not technology, remains our most powerful tool.

Being “**breast aware**” simply means knowing what’s normal for you and noticing any changes—be it a lump, skin dimpling, nipple discharge, or a change in shape. Women over 40 should undergo regular mammography, and those with a family history or genetic risk should start even earlier.

Early diagnosis transforms outcomes—from a life-threatening crisis to a completely treatable condition. Community-based awareness programs, workplace health checks, and media outreach are essential in normalising conversations around breast health.

Understanding the Risks

While genetics and age play a role, lifestyle is an equally important factor. Urban lifestyles marked by late childbirth, obesity, stress, and reduced breast-feeding have added to the risk.

As clinicians, we often emphasize that small lifestyle changes—regular exercise, a balanced diet, and limiting alcohol—can make a big difference. Prevention is still the best medicine.

Oncoplastic Surgery: Where Medicine Meets Art

For decades, the mention of breast cancer carried the shadow of mastectomy. Women often feared losing not just a breast, but a part of their identity.

But that narrative is changing. The emergence of oncoplastic breast surgery—which combines cancer removal with plastic surgery techniques has redefined outcomes.

Today, we can remove the tumour completely while reshaping or reconstructing the breast, often in the same operation. The goal is simple: cure without compromise.

At our institute, we’ve seen how this approach restores not just the body but also confidence. Patients often say, “I never imagined I could look normal again.” That moment—when a woman looks in the mirror and smiles again—is what drives us forward.

Bridging the Gap: Government and Grassroots Action

The government's initiatives under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) have expanded screening at the primary health level. However, greater emphasis on breast health education and training healthcare workers in early detection is vital.

Several NGOs and advocacy groups are complementing these efforts by conducting awareness drives, screening camps, and survivorship support programs. Their contribution, especially in rural India, has been instrumental in reaching women who would otherwise remain undiagnosed until late stages.

Yet, India's scale demands more. We need sustained, large-scale public health education starting right from school-level awareness about women's health.

My Why

People often ask me what keeps me motivated after years in this field. My answer is simple: **every breast saved is a life restored.**

My why is the smile of a woman walking out of surgery, knowing she's cancer-free and still herself. My why is the mother who tells her daughter, "Get checked early—I did, and it saved my life."

Breast cancer isn't just a medical diagnosis—it's a societal challenge that calls for empathy, awareness, and collective will.

As we mark **Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2025**, let's move beyond pink ribbons and hashtags. Let's start real conversations. Let's ensure no woman delays care out of fear or ignorance.

Because when detected early, **breast cancer is not just treatable—it's curable.**

Be breast aware. Be proactive. That's my why.

Dr. K.M.M. Vishvak Chanthar
Chief of Breast Onco Surgery Unit - II

29TH FOUNDATION DAY



RGCIRC celebrated its 29th Foundation Day under the theme **Healing Hands, Hopeful Hearts**. The grand event took place on Saturday, 25th October 2025 at Hotel Crowne Plaza, Rohini, Delhi, bringing together more than **1200 members** of the RGCIRC family, including the Governing Council, Management, Directors, Senior Consultants and staff from various departments.

The celebration began a day earlier with the **Pre-Foundation Day ceremony** on **Friday, 24th October 2025**, held at **Indraprastha Hall, RGCIRC, Delhi**. During this event, individuals and teams were recognized for their

invaluable contributions to the institution. Awards were presented for **long service, outstanding performance, Clinical IT implementation, best ward, and best outsourced workers**, reflecting RGCIRC's commitment to excellence across all spheres.

Continuing the tradition, the Foundation Day celebration featured a vibrant **cultural program**, enthusiastically performed and warmly appreciated by all attendees. The energy, creativity and team spirit showcased by participants added a memorable charm to the evening.



A special moment of the ceremony was the felicitation of **Dr. Vineet Talwar, Director - Department of Medical Oncology**, who was honored for completing **more than 25 years of dedicated service** with RGCIRC. His commitment and contributions have been instrumental in the institution's journey.

The celebrations concluded with the presentation of key recognitions, including the **Chairman's Appreciation Award, Best Resident Award**, and the **Master of Ceremony Award**, acknowledging individuals who have exemplified professionalism, leadership and enthusiasm.

The 29th Foundation Day once again underscored RGCIRC's legacy of compassionate care, teamwork and unwavering dedication - truly reflecting its theme of **Healing Hands and Hopeful Hearts**.



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 Dr. D. S. Gangwar
 Dr. S. K. Rawal (Medical Director)
 Dr. D. C. Doval
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 Dr. Anurag Mehta
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