

CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

CHITTARANJAN NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE, CALCUTTA (CNCI)

The Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute (CNCI) in Calcutta is one of the major comprehensive cancer centers in India. Started by an eminent cancer surgeon, Dr Subodh, Mitra, and inaugurated by Noble Laureate Madam J. Currie on the 12th of January 1950, it has incorporated both a hospital and a research center within the one organization since 1987. A highlight in its history was the installation of the first tele-cobalt unit for cancer therapy in Eastern India, in 1961, commemorated by a visit by the then Prime Minister of India, Sir Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1995, an independent division of Preventive Oncology was added to look after the cancer prevention and screening programmes, mainly in the state of West Bengal, with a population of 80 million. Prof Dr M Siddiqi, one of the Advisory Board members of the APJCP, is the Director, providing leadership to 30 senior scientists, about 45 scientific assistants and 30 junior scientists and research scholars. In the hospital, in addition, the 200-bed facility is supported by 35 specialists in various branches of oncology and about 40 junior physicians. The CNCI hospital attends to an average of 6000 new cancer patients and about 30,000 follow-up visits every year. In addition to housing one of the best facilities for radiotherapy in the country, with two tele-cobalt machines, computerised treatment planning system, simulator and brachytherapy units, and a linear accelerator planned, it provides supportive care and rehabilitation and counseling services.



Prof Dr M Siddiqi



CNCI Hospital

The therapeutic departments are supported by Departments of Imaging and Radiology, and pathology, as well as Units of Histopathology and Cytology, Clinical Chemistry and Haematology. The hospital is equipped with 5 operation theatres including a dedicated OT for fibre-optic endoscopy. Its Medical Records Department collaborates with the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics to maintain its Hospital-based cancer registry (HCR) and Population-based cancer registry (PBCR) for Calcutta. There is also close collaboration between the hospital doctors and scientific staff to achieve the aims of the research center, the multi-disciplinary orientation being reflected in Programmes for Cancer Diagnostics and Experimental Therapy, Molecular Mechanisms of Cancer, Tumour Growth Regulation and Cancer Risk Factors and Prevention. Active collaboration with other institutes is fostered and the CNCI participates in international studies on cervical cancer screening, tobacco prevalence and cancer registration with IARC/WHO.

There is a strong interest in the chemoprevention field, partially in association with the German Cancer Research Center in Heidelberg. Dr Sukta Das, the Head of the Department of Chemoprevention is one of the Specialist Editors for Natural Products in the APJCP. In fact, an example of her work is reported in the present volume.

With regard to the emphasis on preventive oncology, several departments of the hospital and research centre are collaborating in public education, screening efforts and the all important development of manpower. Besides running

regular cancer awareness programmes and cancer detection clinics for the public, the division is currently conducting a cervical screening project and a trial of the chemopreventive role of vitamins E and A in CIN cases, as well as providing guidance for HPV screening and several epidemiological studies in the state of West Bengal. A field unit in Chandernagore, the Ruplal Nandy Memorial Cancer Centre, has been running OPD for detection of high risk cancers in the region, which include uterine cervix, breast and oral cavity neoplasias. The unit is being re-organized to develop it into an outstation diagnostic and treatment centre for medical personnel and health workers for cancer screening and detection in the rural and semi-urban areas.

The CNCI - an impressive example of taking cancer prevention to the people.



CNCI Research Centre