



Jeevodaya Hospice

1/86, Kamaraj Road, Mathur, Manali P.O., Chennai - 600 068.
Tel. : 55 55 565 / 55 59 671 Email : jeevodaya@vsnl.com
Website : www.jeevodaya.org

Vol. I – Issue 4, Dec. 2000, Jan., Feb. 2001
A Quarterly News Bulletin



For Private Circulation - Free copy

Editorial

Among the many cancers that so painfully prefigure death among humankind, cancer of the cervix is the single most widespread malignancy that affect women in India. The percentage being even greater than that of breast cancer (covered in our last issue). A quick glance at the incidence of cancer cervix and breast cancer at Jeevodaya for the last years 1995 – 2001 reveal the following data : cancer cervix - 232, cancer breast-156

Ignorance continues to be a major factor in the high ratio of death from cancer. This issue is one more drop in the effort to create awareness among the lay people. Sometimes the vastness of the task may bag us down. At such times I recall the story of an old man who used to walk on the beach tossing the stranded starfish back into the sea. A sarcastic young man asked, “ There must be hundreds of starfish, how can you make a difference?” “ It make a difference to this one,” the old man replied, as he tossed one more starfish into the sea. If just one life is saved due to this newsletter, our efforts will be rewarded.

– Sr. Lalitha Teresa F.C.C.

Carcinoma Cervix

Cancer cervix is the most common malignancy in women in most of the developing countries including India. At present through out the globe there are nearly 1 million women affected by cervical cancer every year. Disturbingly, in India, the prevalence is more amongst the comparatively younger age group.

Three quarters of all these women are in the developing countries where effective screening facilities have not been instituted. The second most common cancer in developing countries like India is Breast Cancer, the ratio between the two being 3:1, unlike in developed countries where Breast cancer happens to be the commonest. Major factors influencing the prevalence of Cancer Cervix in a population are Economic Factors, Sexual Behavior and Degree of effective mass screening.

Causes

Exact cause of cancer cervix is not known. However unregulated, disorganized proliferation of cell growth, Chronic irritation and certain carcinogenic agents have been discovered to contribute to the growth of cervical cancer.

Risk factors

1. Early age of first intercourse.
2. Having many sexual partners.
3. Multiparous
4. Positive family history
5. Unhygienic conditions
6. Early marriage
7. Action of Oestrogen increases the risk

Detection

Cancer cervix can take many years to develop. Early detection is possible by PAP smear test. The smear test not only detects cancer that has already developed but more importantly helps to prevent cervical cancer. The smear test is designed to detect changes in the cells before they develop into cancer, so that effective treatment may be given before it become cancerous.

Symptoms

1. Abnormal vaginal bleeding such as between and or after intercourse.
2. Smelly vaginal discharge.
3. Discomfort during intercourse.
4. Post menopausal bleeding

Unrelated symptoms

1. Loss of appetite
2. Loss of weight
3. Breathlessness
4. Weakness of body

Types of Cancer Cervix

There are two main types, Squamous cell carcinoma and Adeno Carcinoma. These names indicate the types of cells on the cervix, which are growing in an abnormal way.

Types of treatment

1. Surgery- Hysterectomy - is usually the treatment for cancer cervix in its early stage, when it is confined to cervix alone.
2. If the cancer has spread beyond the cervix and is not curable with surgery alone, then radiotherapy is preferred. Radiotherapy may also be used after surgery if there is risk that the disease may come back, for example if the Lymph glands are affected.

3. Chemotherapy may sometimes be used before surgery so as to make the cancer growth shrink and to make the operation easier. Chemotherapy may also be applied to patients whose cancer has been spread to other parts of the body or whose disease has come back after radiotherapy. Chemotherapy is applied in this situation to control the disease and to relieve symptoms with the hope of prolonging quality of life.

Effects of treatment depends on various factors

1. Age
2. General health
3. The type and size of the Tumor
4. Histopathological report
5. Spread of the disease beyond cervix

A lot of women feel helpless when they are told that they have Cancer Cervix. If the patient and their family understand their illness and its treatment they can be better prepared to cope with the situation. Personal medical information should come first from your own doctor who is familiar with your medical background. Many people talk about 'Fighting their Illness'. One easy way of doing this is by planning a healthy well balanced diet. Another possible way is to learn relaxation techniques.

Great care is required in caring for patients, especially terminally ill patients. The emotional support given by the nurses depends on their personal experience. Usually the patient wants to discuss her situation and the nurses can linger casually while they are with the patients.

How cancer cervix affects sex life

Surgery and radiotherapy for cancer cervix may have effect on sex life. But many of the changes can either be prevented or treated. If the patient has undergone hysterectomy and the ovaries have also been removed or if she has had radiotherapy to the pelvis she will experience menopausal symptoms. This include hot flushes, dry skin, dryness of vagina, and less interest in sex. Many of these symptoms can be eased by hormone creams or tablets. Radiotherapy to the pelvis can cause the vagina to become narrow and this can make sex difficult or uncomfortable. Hormone creams applied to vagina may help to extend. But regular sex or use of vaginal dilator is often the easiest and more effective means.

Many women feel nervous in having sex after treatment for cancer, but it is perfectly safe. Sex won't make the cancer worse nor will the partner catch cancer from his cancer-affected wife. Regular gentle sex will

help the vagina regain its suppleness and the patient can resume normal sex life, a few weeks after radiotherapy.

Each patient's problem will be unique. It is essential that the surgeon and the nursing staff coordinate their efforts to caring for each patient.

The mortality due to cancer cervix happens to be very high inspite of the efficient treatment modalities available, because of self-neglect on women's part along with ineffective mass screening. Many women don't approach a physician even after the onset of symptoms.

The incidence of cancer cervix and the mortality associated with Cancer cervix can be brought down only by the combined efforts of the Government, the NGO's and the general public. This can be achieved mainly by creating awareness among the people through health education and instituting mass screening programs thus enabling early diagnosis and treatment. This will enable us not only to bring down the incidence of cervical cancer but will go a long way in improving the quality of life of the patients suffering from cervical cancer. The sooner you see your doctor and the earlier the diagnosis the better the chances of treatment leading to a complete recovery.



– *Dr. Ponnai. M. DGO*
Honorary Medical Officer

Details of Cancer screening and Cancer awareness programs attended by Jeevodaya During 2000 - 2001

No.	Date	Venue	Organized by	No. of PAP smear	Cancer cervix
01	30-01-'00	Sennai Amman Nagar	Lions Club, Chetpet	42	02
02	05-02-'00	Royapettah	Lions club, Chetpet	09	02
03	24-03-'00	Jeevodaya	Royapettah Govt. Hospital	77	05
04	09-04-'00	Taramani High School	Rotary Club, Chennai	22	03
05	26-06-00	St. Ann's novitiate	Jeevodaya	Only awareness program	
06	16-07-'00	St. Antony's church, Avadi	Catholic Assn.	19	05
07	30-07-'00	Rama Krishna Mission H.S.S	Jeyar Ednl. Trust	20	Nil
08	12-08-'00	Amala Annai Alayam, Chrompet	Amala Annai Parish	18	07
09	26-08-'00	Thirukandalam	Lions club	54	05
10	08-09-'00	Kotturpuram	DESH	56	01
11	01-10-'00	Corporation school, Adyar	Govt. Hospital, Royapettah	03	02
12	14-11-'00	Periyar Nagar	Asha Nivas	58	09
13	14-12-'00	Ambatur	Lions Club, Chetpet	35	04
14	24-01-'01	Vyasarpadi	DESH	49	01
15	08-02-'01	CTTE College	Dept. of Commerce	Only awareness program	

The incidence of Cancer Cervix and Breast cancer at Jeevodaya Cancer Hospice, 1995 – 2001
Cancer Cervix - 232 Cancer Breast - 156



Dr. Nanjunda Rao and Dr. Snehalatha in the awareness & screening camp.

Reaching Out

Greetings to all the readers of this very inspiring Newsletter from Jeevodaya! I am much privileged to write these few lines in this issue. We who have read the Bible know very well that when Jesus was on this earth he went about doing good. Today His great works are still being continued through organisations like jeevodaya and the noble sisters of this organisation

I came to know about Jeevodaya three years ago when I organised a medical camp through most renowned Dr. Nanjunda Rao. However it was just recently that I started associating myself with them. I was really astounded to know the yeomen service they were rendering to the persons who were in the last stages of cancer. Words cannot express the love and care given by these nuns and I was much more surprise to know that all these their services are free to both the rich and the poor irrespective of caste and creed.



Ms. Maria Fatima with Sr. Samuel, Executive Director of Jeevodaya F.C.C.

Their care and concern is not confined to the four walls of Jeevodaya but they have come forward to conduct camps where ever they are called to create awareness on cancer, to educate people and also do screenings to identify cases of cancer. Again this is free. I have had the privilege of several organising camps with their great help and it was very beneficial to many who attended, as many women were found to be having this killer disease, which can be cured if detected early. We could save many such cases. If one wishes to know what is selfless service one should visit Jeevodaya and meet all the nuns in that organisation with their ready smile and healing hands, feeding, cleaning and soothing the pains of each and every individual in their care. May God bless their untiring efforts and we readers let us tell about their works to every one we meet, so that we become copartners in service to humanity and thus to God.

- Maria Fatima Raj

News letter sponsored by :

MEDIMIX

Ayurvedic Bath Soap



<http://www.medimixindia.com>

Published by Sr. Lalitha Teresa, on behalf of Jeevodaya Public Charitable Trust from Jeevodaya Hospice,
Editor Sr. Lalitha Teresa, 1/86, Kamaraj Road, Mathur, Manali P.O., Chennai - 600 068.

Printed by : J.A.E. Diaz, at Pio Printers Pvt. Ltd., 83, East Mada Church Road, Royapuram, Chennai - 600 013. Ph. : 5227242