

Editor Speak

Dear Readers,

Issue and Challenges in Oncology Practices

Recently there was an International Conference on Integrative Oncology organised by the Global Homeopathy Foundation at Koch. Prof (Dr) Michael Dixon, Chairman of the College of Medicine and Integrative Health, UK was the Chief Guest. Dr Dixon is a strong advocate of preventative medicine, healthy living and integrated care. About 40 scientific papers were presented by experts of Onco-radiology, Chemo-oncology, Palliative oncology, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani, Siddha, Onco-psychology, Onco-nutition etc. Several cancer centres also participated in the two day conference. It was the first time where experts from different medical system sat for two days and discussed on integrating various practices in cancer care.

The take home message of the conference could be summarised as under:

Cancer need to be seen as any other disease and the patient centric approach shall be more appropriate rather than a diseases centric approach.

The war on cancer is far from being won, and even today many types of cancers have very poor survival and cure rates, eg, pancreatic cancer, ovarian cancer and lung cancer.

Costly interventions are used on desperate cancer patients. Despite painful treatment methods including chemotherapy and staggering treatment costs, improved survival outcomes are not necessarily provided.

The cause of most of the cancers is not fully known. There is an endless search for carcinogens. The agents that are considered to be carcinogenic are not affecting every individual, while the people who are not exposed to such agents also become victims of the same disease, be it food items, smoking; there by an unwanted cause–effect phobia has been created.

The substances that are known to cause cancer such as radiation and chemicals are used for its treatment and possibly those are the only substances that are accepted for scientific treatment. All that is used to cure cancer appears to cause cancer!!

Cancer affects the whole organism and not restricted to any part, organ or tissue.

By the time the cancer gets diagnosable even with the most advanced techniques, the disease might have started in the body much before, in some cases 5-20 yrs before it reaches a diagnosable state. Early detection dictum is a sheer myth.

As the cause of the cancer is not definite, its preventive approach is also uncertain.

Ones diet need not be the best for the other.

It was not a homeopathic conference, but most of the deliberations were more akin to the concept of health, diseases and treatment in Homeopathy. Homeopathic practitioners have claimed for some decades now that they have treated thousands of cases, and even indicated many cured cases. This claim cannot be discarded. As we now know about the cause, nature, progress and prognosis, it fits into the concept of Homeopathic philosophy of chronic diseases/ miasm. There is a valid correlation on the individual susceptibly, suppression, origin of deep rooted diseases at a deeper level and understanding the patient rather than the diseases etc.

The claim of effectiveness of Homeopathic medicine has been unable to make an impact in oncology, as not received sufficient attention, examination or appropriate positioning. Consequently, the successful cases are not discussed. The scope of Homeopathy in understanding cancer patient and possibly finding a cancer diathesis much before the cancer reaches at the level of diagnosable stage through laboratory and investigative techniques need to be studied in an new paradigm. There is a need to understand cancer from a different spectrum. The approach in Homeopathy is patient centric giving importance to the constitution, temperament of the individual. It may be possible to identify the person with cancer diathesis by the concept of constitution and temperaments much before cellular pathology might set in. Cancer cell is an altered normal cell. Cancer is neither hereditary nor familial. Before a normal person become dis-eased the prodromal state is expressed by the body. If he continues ignoring the warning signals, the cellular pathology gets settled at a faster pace, but in case he adopts necessary modifications, the cells take more time to express its monstrous designs. The role of other AYUSH systems is equally potent.

Tapping the potential of AYUSH in cancer is a tremendous opportunity, which can help transform the lives of millions. This is in line with the objective of popularising AYUSH systems to address contemporary issues. Once efficacy of any AYUSH system is established for a complex disease like cancer, it will serve AYUSH objectives on the global stage. Today, there is huge global interest in these systems.

The objective of cancer care should be to make a difference in the lives of millions of people. The theme of International day of Cancer of 2020 is “I can, we can”. Together we can face the challenges of cancer, provided a fresh look is adopted in cancer causative factors, cancer care, prevention and its treatment.

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