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National Cancer Grid- Andhra Pradesh State Chapter

Background: The National Cancer Grid is a network of major cancer centers, research institutes, patient groups and charitable institutions across India with the mandate of establishing uniform standards of patient care for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer, providing specialized training and education in oncology and facilitating collaborative basic, translational and clinical research in cancer. NCG has been extended internationally as NCG VISHWAM since 2019 to include cancer centers from Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Africa.

Andhra Pradesh State chapter of the National Cancer Grid (NCG-AP) was established through the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Tata Memorial Centre and Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, Visakhapatnam (HBCH & RC - A Unit of Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai) with HBCH&RC Visakhapatnam as Secretariat in June 2022.

The Secretariat for the Andhra Pradesh State Chapter of National Cancer Grid (NCG-AP) was inaugurated by the Honorable Health Minister of Andhra Pradesh in July 2022. The founding members of the NCG-AP chapter were the 9 government medical colleges and 2 institutes. The Secretariat is funded by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare AP. All the hospitals enrolled under Dr. YSR. Aarogyasri scheme were also invited to be a part of the NCG-AP state chapter in January 2023, after which 2 private hospitals and AIIMS Mangalagiri joined the network. The AP-NCG members have been inducted into the National Cancer Grid since October 2022.

Activities of the NCG AP in 2022-2023

The activities under the aegis of the NCG-AP chapter were initiated from July 2022 onwards. The core purpose of the NCG-AP chapter includes creating an efficient network for communication and co-ordination of various state chapter activities, integrating the state chapter members into the National Cancer Grid.

A. Creating an efficient State-level network (online and offline) for communication and coordination of various State Chapter activities:

From July 2022 a state level network was established both online & offline through an email mailing list and a nodal person was identified at every participating institute. Regular meetings are held every second Tuesday (previously Wednesday) of the month. Each institute has also formed a multi-disciplinary tumor board at their individual centre in August 2022. For all the communications related to training & education and tumor boards a dedicated meeting room through online platform *i-ECHO Zoom* has been created.

B. Education & Training

1. Virtual tumor Board Meetings: National and State Level:

Virtual Tumour Board is a way for oncologists to discuss difficult cases for making clinical decisions. NCG-AP members & tumor boards have been included in the NCG Virtual Tumour Board (VTB) discussions since November 2022 and the schedule for Disease Management Group (DMG) wise VTB has been shared with all institutes. NCG-AP Chapter members have been actively participating in the National VTB's. All the members are motivated to participate in Virtual Tumour Board for their active participation, schedule for the same shared with all the members through the WhatsApp group created & also on their provided E Mail IDs. Quarterly schedule for VTB also shared with all the members. The attendance of Virtual Tumour Board is maintained to assess the participation and involvement of NCG-AP Members and promoting their active participation for difficult and complicated Cancer cases and Academic purposes. The updates for all the

Ongoing Conferences, Continuous medical education and Training e.g., EBM, ICC Updates are provided to all NCG-AP Members through WhatsApp & provided E mail Ids.

2. ‘Train the Trainer’s’ Initiatives

a. *Palliative Care:*

Palliative Care Department conducted training for 22 Doctors and Nurses nominated by the State Government under NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION which included 4 days theory training (from 30th January to 2nd February 2023) in **Principles of Palliative Care in Oncology** followed by practical hands-on training in batches of six. The participants were also sensitized to the multidisciplinary team approach in Oncology care by rotations in Radiation oncology, Medical oncology, Physiotherapy, Speech and swallow therapy, Nutrition, Psycho-oncology and Preventive Oncology. Practical training session were completed by 4th March 2023. Pre-test and post-test were conducted for all the participants; study material was shared with all the participants on daily basis through the WhatsApp group created. Email IDs and contact details were shared with all the participants for future support and guidance. Feedback form was also shared with all the participants. The Doctors and Staff Nurses who completed the Palliative Care” **Train the Trainers**” module completely (Theory and Practical) were awarded training Certificates. Out of 22 Doctors and Nurses 17 (8 Doctors and 9 Nurses) completed both training successfully, completed the exit test and were awarded the certificates. The detailed completion report submitted to the Health Department.

b. *Preventive Oncology& Screening of Common Cancers:*

From March 2023 onwards, Preventive Oncology department has conducted training for 3 batches of 30 Doctors and Nurses each nominated from Primary Health Centres/District Hospital by State Government under **National Health Mission**. Ninety doctors and nurses completed the training successfully. Certificates were awarded to the Participants who completed more than 6 sessions out of 8 sessions (Daily 2 sessions:1

morning and 1 evening) During the training participants are sensitized to Physiology and Pathology, Primary and secondary prevention (diet, physical activity, tobacco cessation etc.) early detection and screening for common cancers. Study material on daily basis is shared with all the participants on regular basis through the WhatsApp group created. Pre and post-test are conducted for all the participants. Contact details and E mail Ids are shared with all the Participants for further support and guidance. Virtual meeting is proposed to be conducted after completion of 1 month of training to assess the problems faced by the participant doctors and nurses during screening for common cancers. Feedback form is shared with all the participants and immediate action also taken (e.g., Vendor details for procurement of items, IEC materials English/Telugu, quick reference charts etc.). the detailed Completion Report for Preventive Oncology Programs have been submitted to State Health Authorities.

C. “Akshara” discovery tool:

Training was held for the participating institutes. The Akshara tool helps to access the latest research papers & publications which is vital for upgradation of knowledge and training of graduates & post-graduates. Demonstration of the platform was done by experts from Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai and the centres submitted contact details for installation of this platform in their libraries in August 2022.

D. Comprehensive Review of Oncology Facilities:

As part of the roadmap for Comprehensive Cancer Care for AP by Health & Family Welfare Ministry, comprehensive review of existing infrastructure including pathology, surgical oncology, radiation oncology, medical oncology and palliative care etc. and expertise for each Institution was carried out. This has helped the health department to plan the augmentation of cancer care facilities in the state in a phase manner. For eg. Purchase Order and Specification of Pathology, Radiology, Nuclear medicine, Radiotherapy (Teletherapy & Brachytherapy) equipments were shared for facilitating procurements by State Government.

E. Cancer Registry:

Minimal data set requirement for the Cancer registry was shared with all the Member Institutes to collect optimal and authentic data for Statistics to work towards strengthening the Hospital Based Cancer Registry.

F. Funds Utilization:

The allocated budget for the year 2022-2023 was Rs.12,62,400, of which Rs 307,238 has been utilized. The budget has been utilized for staff salaries including one coordinator and administrative assistant. The institute charges, training and observer ship fees have all been waived off by HBCH & RC Visakhapatnam.

G. Future plans:

The upcoming plans include EQUIP training courses, setting up VTB exclusively for Palliative Care and Community Oncology Certificate Courses and State Cancer Registry activities.

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- *Ministry of Health, Family Welfare and Medical Education*
- *Dr. R. A. Badwe, Director, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai*
- *Dr C. S. Pramesh, Convenor, National Cancer Grid*



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Convenor

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Signing of MOU between AP State Govt. & HBCH & RC Visakhapatnam



Inauguration of the Secretariat of NCG-AP Chapter – July 2022

