



NEWS LETTER

ISSUE : MAY 2024 | VOLUME: 28 | No. 5 | PRICE: 50 PAISA

What's Inside: 1. EDITORIAL | 2. ROLE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CANCER CARE | 3. ANAESTHESIA TO EMPATHY – EMBRACING THE HUMAN SIDE OF MEDICINE | 4. CME WITH INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (IMA) OUTER WEST BRANCH, DELHI | 5. CME WITH MEERUT OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

EDITORIAL EXPRESSING GRATITUDE!

Gratitude is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative and is associated with several mental and physical health benefits. When you experience gratitude, you feel grateful for something or someone in your life and respond with feelings of kindness, warmth, and other forms of generosity.

You get up in morning hail and hearty with all body parts intact. Be grateful to God. You work throughout the day, you are able to sleep well without sleeping pills. Are you not the happiest person? Be grateful to God.

Generally speaking, gratitude involves recognizing that something good has happened to you. It also consists of acknowledging that someone is responsible for it, whether it's a specific person in your life, an impersonal source like nature, or a divine entity. While it's easy to feel a rush of joy after winning the lottery or receiving a big promotion at work, gratitude extends to the smaller blessings in life that are often overlooked or taken for granted. Even the smallest moments, such as a brief chat with a friend, a kind gesture from a stranger, a cool breeze on a hot day, or a peaceful stroll in nature, are things that you can be thankful for.

In 2006, I was going to MD Anderson Hospital, Houston, Texas for short-term training. My booking for stay got cancelled and I came to know a day before my departure from Delhi. Visiting on an uncharted territory was quite frightening for me. My wife talked to her colleague who had contacts in Houston. I got a contact, reached Houston, was received by a gentleman Mr. J at airport. He got me a reasonably priced hotel, arranged for my day-to-day food, lodging. He used to visit me in hotel at least twice a week. I was invited by his family at his home. I went for sightseeing with him. He dropped me off at airport after 1 month of my training. A God-sent human being! A rare breed of people doing everything without any expectation. He was a divine entity! I am greatly indebted to that God-sent man, for life. I feel good mentally whenever I remember him!

Gratitude is often a spontaneous emotion that you feel in the moment. Some people are naturally prone to experiencing it more often than others, but experts suggest that it is also something that you can cultivate and learn to practice more often. Developing a sense of gratitude isn't complex or challenging. It doesn't require any special tools or training. And the more you practice it, the better you will become and put yourself into a grateful state of mind. Here's how to do this:

1 Observe the Moment - Take a second to focus on your experience and how you are feeling. Take stock of your senses and think about what is helping you cope. Are there people who have done something for you, or are there particular things helping you manage your stress, feel good about your life, or accomplish what you need to do? Give yourself time to really enjoy the moment. Focus on the experience and allow yourself to absorb those good feelings.

2 Write it Down - Simply listing two or three items each day and focusing on experiencing gratitude for them.

3 Create Gratitude Rituals - Giving thanks can help you feel a greater sense of gratitude. Gratitude is all about recognizing and appreciating those people, things, moments, skills, or gifts that bring joy, peace, or comfort into our lives. Show your appreciation. The practice of gratitude can have a significant positive impact on both physical and psychological health. Some of the benefits of gratitude that researchers have uncovered include:

1. Better sleep
2. Better immunity
3. Higher self-esteem
4. Decreased stress
5. Lower blood pressure
6. Less anxiety and depression
7. Stronger relationships
8. Higher levels of optimism
9. Greater life satisfaction

Gratitude blocks toxic emotions, such as envy, resentment, regret, and depression, which can destroy our happiness. This kind of thinking leads to release of serotonin and dopamine, chemicals in the brain that are associated with happiness and pleasure. Acknowledging gratitude also decreases stress.

Because gratitude can boost your mood, perhaps it's no surprise that it can also improve your overall mental health. While gratitude alone may not be a magic bullet to mental health issues, it can be one part of a broader treatment plan. Approaching life with a more positive mindset can do more than just improve your mood. It can have cascading benefits in other areas of your life. In the movie "Munna Bhai MBBS" Mr. Sanjay Dutt, Munna Bhai hugs a sweeper (Mr. Surendra Ranjan). He only expresses his gratitude. Sweeper says "Bas kar Ab Rulaoge Kya"

(Continued on 4th Page)

ROLE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CANCER CARE

The treating oncologists and caregivers of a patient diagnosed with cancer are understandably immersed in providing onco-directed care as a priority. However, a holistic approach warrants that we do not ignore fatigue, depression, anxiety, lymphedema, sleep problems and subsequent reduced quality of life, often experienced by these patients during the course of treatment. Various treatment modalities for cancer can have a negative impact on cardiovascular, endocrine gastrointestinal, immune, nervous and respiratory systems, at times persisting beyond completion of treatment.

How can physical activity help?

Various animal studies have explored the molecular mechanisms that come into play after supervised exercise programs and regulate cell proliferation, angiogenesis and metastasis in cancer. Their clinical benefits have been highlighted in ample scientific literature published in the last decade.

A study on breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy, observed that regular physical activity combined with an appropriate diet reduced the fatigue resulting from intensive cancer treatment. (1) Combined aerobic and resistance exercise performed during chemotherapy resulted in improved sleep quality, reduced anxiety and depression and a positive impact on happiness in breast and colorectal cancer patients. (2) Similarly, an 8-week exercise intervention programme consisting of twice-per-week sessions of 60 minutes of resistance, flexibility and cardiorespiratory exercises performed by patients with different types of cancer improved expression of positive emotions, functional capacity with a positive influence on mental health. (3)

Combined aerobic and resistance exercise along with a low-fat, high-fibre diet reduces the incidence of metabolic syndrome (a known risk factor for breast cancer recurrence) in cancer survivors. A randomised controlled trial conducted among 100 breast cancer survivors, assigned either to exercise or usual care, showed an improvement in BMI and levels of circulating biomarkers, insulin, IGF-1, adiponectin and leptin, in the exercise group. (4)

An association between physical activity and reduction in mortality by 40–50% has been observed in colorectal, breast and prostate cancer patients. (5)

Physical activity can improve immune system function by mobilizing leukocytes with increased functional capacity into the circulation. It may have an impact on CTLA-4 (inhibitory immune checkpoint) and improve the response to immunotherapy. (6)

How much exercise/physical activity is recommended?

The type and extent of physical activity that can be recommended by the oncologist depends on the general condition of an individual patient and should be supervised by a trainer.

Widely endorsed recommendations from national and international health authorities suggest participation in 150

minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise, 3–5 sessions per week, in addition to resistance training at least 2 days per week as part of a programme lasting 6–12 weeks. (7)

What are the barriers to undertaking physical activity?

There may be a number of barriers preventing a patient from undertaking a sustained physical activity program such as the nature, type and extent of cancer; presence of metastases; cancer therapy and its side effects; patient's attitude and coping strategy; social and family support; lack of an exercise partner or facilities in the vicinity; fear of injury; lack of willpower or interest; unavailability of information about the way and type of exercise.

The stress to continuously balance between treatment, family commitments and career often overrides the unwavering adherence to physical activity regimens, thus requiring reinforcement towards the latter by the treating oncologist.

Can physical activity be harmful to a cancer patient?

A systematic review of 129 published and unpublished trials with more than 12,000 participants was published in the Lancet in 2023. It concluded that the harms of exercise, prescribed alone or as part of multimodal interventions, is uncertain in patients with cancer undergoing systemic treatments due to high risk of bias, poor reporting, and lack of trials. An early evidence of a higher risk of fractures and thrombosis was found in exercise versus control groups and that these findings may be considered in future revisions of current cancer-specific exercise guidelines.

Conclusion

Physical activity improves aerobic fitness, mental health and reduces the side effects of cancer treatment, fatigue and mortality in cancer patients. Once a patient has been initiated to onco care, a concerted effort should be made by the treating team to direct the patient towards measures contributing to general well-being, including physical exercise; of course, taking into account specific requirements and contraindications for the same.

References

1. Carayol M et al. BMC Cancer 2019;19:737.
2. Singh B et al. Int J Behav Nutr 2020;17:122.
3. Cataldi S et al. Acta Med Mediterr 2020;36:1105.
4. Dieli-Conwright et al. J Clin Oncol 2018;36:875.
5. McTiernan A et al. Med Sci Sports Exerc 2019;51:1252.
6. Gustafson MP et al. J Immunother Cancer 2021;9:e001872.
7. Newton RU et al. Med J Aust 2019;210:54.
8. Thomsen SN et al. EClinicalMedicine 2023; 59:101937.

Dr Anjali Pahuja,
Senior Consultant
Department of Radiation Oncology

ANAESTHESIA TO EMPATHY – EMBRACING THE HUMAN SIDE OF MEDICINE

Seldom in life do we come across opportunities that transform our perspectives. Rarely do opportunities arise that change the path of your career; for me, that opportunity was my affiliation with Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre (RGCIRC), Niti Bagh, a hospital that provided me with tremendous exposure and challenges that shaped me into the physician I am today. My journey here at RGCIRC as an anaesthetist began with the objective of improving my understanding of oncoanaesthesia, but I had no idea what lay ahead of me.

Being a part of a centre that provides cancer treatment exclusively allowed me to observe patients undergoing various disease-directed therapies (surgery, chemotherapy, radiation) and closely monitor the course of their illness. Along with conducting surgeries and keeping track of chemotherapy patients, here at Niti Bagh, I also became a part of a team of healthcare professionals who were committed to providing compassionate palliative care to cancer patients in both inpatient and outpatient settings. The influence that good palliative care can have on a patient's quality of life even if received in the hospice phase is something I had initially underestimated, but eventually grew to value.

Furthermore, I grew to appreciate the importance of a grossly undermined skill in medicine – communication. When used correctly, communication has the power to alleviate suffering. I saw how effective communication offered comfort, fostered trust, allowed for expression of wishes and helped facilitate decision making whilst working here. I saw patients and their families who were happier despite knowing that their path would likely result in the loss of a loved one. They went through less emotional turmoil and guilt, and were more accepting of their condition.

Poor prognosis/End-of-life discussions are often regarded as one of the most difficult by both doctors and patients. This is due to a lack of effective empathetic communication - a skill that like any other must be learnt, practiced, and nurtured. Navigating advanced cancer trajectories can be mentally taxing, necessitating skilled compassionate communication to provide information, support, and guidance. Participating in communication training seminars helped me gain an understanding of how to handle these volatile situations. I

saw myself mature into a confident clinician, not shying from difficult discussions. Conversations that would once rattle me now became my source of strength. My communication abilities helped me establish trusting relationships with patients and their families, encouraging open and honest conversations that allowed for informed decision-making and enhanced emotional support.

Pain, the most feared symptom of cancer, was supposed to be my strong suit as an anaesthetist, or so I thought! I had no idea I was only scratching the surface. Over the years here, I learnt more and more about cancer pain - its complexities - and began to see how it can consume every aspect of a patient's life. Techniques such as nerve block procedures (MIPISs – minimally invasive pain and spine interventions), desensitization drips alongside conventional pain management methods like analgesic medication administration became new skills I added to my arsenal. I found that combining these complementary treatments into a comprehensive treatment plan could considerably improve pain relief for patients while also allowing them to stick to their disease directed treatment plan. Eventually, I was able to adjust these strategies to each patient's unique needs and preferences thereby increasing their general well-being.

Overall, the experience at RGCIRC, Niti Bagh has been invaluable in expanding my knowledge and polishing my skills in oncoanaesthesia, ICU care, pain management, and effective communication. As a healthcare worker, these experiences prepared me to deliver comprehensive and empathetic treatment while also strengthening my ability to think on my feet and adapt to changing situations.

I was no longer just defined by my role as an anaesthetist that carried out the surgery they underwent, but I grew into a clinician who saw them through different phases of their cancer journey - often as an anaesthetist and critical care expert, occasionally as a doctor for their pain management, sometimes as a palliative and hospice care specialist, and occasionally even as someone who merely helps them navigate this challenging road.

When I joined this Institute, my boss told me I would be a different person and here I am on the other side seeing myself transform, excited for the challenges and discoveries that lie ahead.

Dr. Naina Kumar

Attending Consultant

Department of Oncoanaesthesia, Pain Management,
Hospice Care and Palliative Medicine
RGCIRC, Niti Bagh

CME WITH INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (IMA) OUTER WEST BRANCH, DELHI

RGCIRC organized a CME in association with IMA Outer West Branch on Saturday, 04th May 2024 at Hotel Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi. Dr. Vipul Sheth, Sr. Consultant & Unit Head, Hemato Oncology & BMTU delivered a lecture on **Car T Cell in Hematology Malignancies** and Dr. Vandana Jain, Sr. Consultant & Chief of Gynae Surgical Oncology spoke on **Awareness of Ovarian & Uterine Cancers**. The CME was very well appreciated by the gathering.



EDITORIAL (CONTINUED)

Research links increased gratitude with higher quality sleep and fewer sleep disturbances. This might be because expressing gratitude right before bed allows you to fall asleep with a more positive outlook. Gratitude might make it easier for you to focus. Imagine that a friend invites you for lunch. As you express your appreciation, you also begin to realize that your friend is spending time and resources on you because he values you. You must express gratitude by appreciating the quality of food, the ambience, the quality time spent, the hospitality and warmth. Gratitude can have social benefits that extend beyond your relationships with loved ones. You could create a chain reaction of prosocial behavior that enhances your workplace or community.

"Be thankful for what you have; You will end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough" (Oprah Winfrey).

Dr.A.K.Dewan

Director-Surgical Oncology, RGCIRC

CME WITH MEERUT OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

RGCIRC organized a CME in association with Meerut Obstetrics & Gynaecological Society on Saturday, 11th May 2024 at Hotel Harmony Inn, Grah Road, Meerut, UP. Dr. Vandana Jain, Sr. Consultant & Chief of Gynae Surgical Oncology delivered a lecture on **Recent Updates in Endometrial Cancer** and Dr. Kapil Goyal, Consultant - Medical Oncology, RGCIRC, Niti Bagh spoke on **Recent Advancements in Ca Breast**.



Mr. D. S. Negi (Chief Executive Officer)
Dr. S. K. Rawal (Medical Director)
Dr. D. C. Doval
Dr. Gauri Kapoor
Dr. Anurag Mehta
Dr. Rajiv Chawla
Dr. Sunil Kumar Puri
Dr. P. S. Choudhury
Dr. Vineet Talwar
Dr. Munish Gairola
Dr. Dinesh Bhurani
Dr. I. C. Premsagar
Dr. Shivendra Singh
Dr. Rajeew Kumar
Dr. Ullas Batra
Dr. Sumit Goyal
Dr. Rajan Arora
Dr. L. M. Darlong
Dr. Kundan Singh Chufal
Dr. Mudit Agarwal
Dr. Narendra Agrawal
Dr. Jaskaran Singh Sethi
Dr. Vaishali Zamre
Dr. Rajat Saha
Dr. Anjali Pahuja
Dr. Vipul Sheth
Dr. Sarika Gupta
Dr. Vandana Jain
Dr. Shubham Jain
Dr. Gurudutt Gupta
Dr. Neelam Sachdeva
Dr. Amardeep Pathak
Dr. Himanshu Rohela
Dr. Pinky Yadav

To,

If undelivered please return to Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, D - 18, Sector - 5, Rohini, Delhi - 110085

Printed and Published by Mr. Pramod Maheshwari on behalf of Indraprastha Cancer Society and Research Centre and printed at R. R. Enterprises, 18 - A, Old Gobind Pura Ext., Street No. 2, Parwana Road, Delhi - 110051, Tel: +91 84474 94107, Published from Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Center, D-18, Sector - 5, Rohini, Delhi - 110085



Dr. A. K. Dewan (Editor)