



Pilot study to examine cost of cancer care and adverse health outcomes in women diagnosed with breast, cervical and ovarian cancer in India – November 2020



The George Institute
for Global Health India

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Facts:

- 8.3% of the total deaths and 5.0% of the total disability-adjusted life-years in India in 2016 were due to cancer, which was double the contribution of cancer in 1990.
- About 96,922 new cervical cancer cases are diagnosed and about 60,078 cervical cancer deaths occur annually in India (estimates for 2018).
- Breast cancer is the leading cancer in Indian females, accounting for the largest crude incidence rate and prevalence of any cancer type.
- Treatment of cancer is a costly affair. OOP expenditure on cancer hospitalization is about 2.5 times the overall average hospitalization expenditure.
- Out-of-pocket (OOP) payments account for more than three quarters of cancer expenditure in India, and the average OOP hospitalization expenditure for cancer care in public sector is estimated to be around INR 29,000.

Project Cycle:

2019-2020

Partners:

Public Health Foundation India;
Post Graduate Institute of Medical
Education & Research.

Supporters:

Low-and Middle-Income Countries
TGI Seed grant

Background:

- A major challenge facing cancer care efforts in India is the inadequacy of public spending on health. Out-of-pocket (OOP) payments, which account for more than three-quarters of cancer expenditures in India, push families into poverty, with potentially catastrophic financial impact, especially if the cancer sufferer is the breadwinner.
- Both cancer treatment and the financial impact can cause psychological distress and adversely impact the quality of life. A study on costs borne by the patients and their families in India, as well as the adverse outcomes that ensue cancer diagnosis is crucial for constructing economically sound plans for financing of cancer care in India.

Aims:

- This pilot study examines the economic impact of breast and cervical cancer on households and assesses the incidence of financial catastrophe and economic hardship associated with the illness.
- Additionally, the study examines the impact of breast and cervical cancer on quality of life of these women. With the larger aim to obtain preliminary data that will allow to refine the protocol for a larger study on cost of cancer in India.

Methods:

- This is a longitudinal study where women with newly diagnosed breast and cervical cancer who are about to start treatment at a tertiary cancer hospital in North India are recruited.
- This study will follow the recruited women for 6 months and will interview them at baseline before start of treatment, and at 3 and 6 months to gather information on healthcare expenditure, economic burden, and impact on quality of life.

Impact:

- The longer-term goal is to derive robust estimates of the economic cost of cancer treatment, including health systems cost, to understand what models of care are affordable and effective, and thereby guide reimbursement decisions for cancer care packages covered under government-funded insurance schemes such as Ayushman Bharat.
- The proposed pilot study will serve as a requisite initial step for planning a national study, encompassing several sites across India, on cost of cancer treatment that will yield national estimates. This larger study will then feed into the longer-term goal of deriving estimates of cost of cancer care packages considering both the health system and patient perspective.

Contact:

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