

World Head and Neck Cancer Day: Workshop Highlights Importance of Early Detection and Cancer Screening

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Head and neck cancers continue to pose a major public health challenge globally, with India bearing nearly one-third of the world's disease burden. According to GLOBOCAN 2024, India records over 3.16 lakh new cases and 1.41 lakh deaths from head and neck cancers every year. The burden is expected to rise significantly by 2050, highlighting the urgent need for prevention, early diagnosis and timely treatment.

Observed annually on July 27, World Head and Neck Cancer Day aims to raise awareness about the disease, encourage people to reduce exposure to risk factors, recognise early warning signs and seek timely medical care to improve survival and quality of life.

To mark the occasion, a workshop on "Oral and Head and Neck Cancer Screening and Basic Clinical Management" was organised on July 24 by the Division of Implementation Science and Behavioural Research (DISBR), Centre for Cancer Epidemiology (CCE), in collaboration with the Public Health Department, Government of Maharashtra. The programme was held at the Mini Auditorium, Paymaster Shodhika, ACTREC, Tata Memorial Centre, an aided institution under the Department of Atomic Energy.

The workshop focused on strengthening the capacity of healthcare professionals in evidence-based oral cancer screening, early detection and multidisciplinary clinical management in line with the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD).

More than 100 medical officers, clinicians, dentists and public health professionals from Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Mumbai and Navi Mumbai participated in the programme.

The scientific sessions covered the epidemiology of head and neck cancers, evidence supporting oral cancer screening, implementation strategies and lessons from screening demonstration projects. Participants also discussed Maharashtra's progress in population-based screening for non-communicable diseases, with a special focus on early detection of oral cancers. Sessions on multidisciplinary treatment approaches and tobacco cessation services further highlighted the importance of comprehensive cancer care.

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