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**The cancer in our mind: An insight into why it must be treated**

**Aalapti Singh**

Institute of Medical Sciences & SUM Hospital, India

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in the GLOBOCAN 2018 report suggests that the global cancer burden has risen to 18.1 million cases and 9.6 million cancer deaths. This calls for an exponential increasing demand for treatment both physical and emotional. In this course, we must not forget to treat the cancer of our minds in the disease's course from diagnosis to survivorship/palliative care. Psycho-oncology is a practice of going beyond traditional medical treatment and serves lifestyle, psychological and social aspects of cancer. It addresses two major dimensions: (1) psychological responses of patients (families and caregivers) to cancer at all stages of the disease; (2) psychosocial factors influencing the disease process. Cancer-related distress is defined as a multifactorial unpleasant emotional experience of a psychological (cognitive, behavioral, emotional), social and/or spiritual nature that may interfere with the ability to cope effectively with cancer, its physical symptoms and treatment. It expands through a continuum from normal sadness to existential crisis, thereby endorsed as the sixth vital sign. Evidence shows, 60% to 80% cancer patients (including families/caregivers) report distress, whereas only a meagre 20% receive help. Hence, distress screening is crucial in identifying individuals to be referred for help. Psycho-oncological interventions have proven to reduce distress, enhance quality of life and increase participation in medical treatment. The most unattended group is the oncology personnel (doctors-surgical, medical, radiation oncologists; nursing staff and other related specialists), who deal with death on a daily basis. Staff burnout is at a tipping point due to extreme stress. Distress screening for them is a necessity, with strengthening practices like open discussions, cut-off time, experience sharing and a conducive working environment should be implemented. Cancer is undoubtedly a disease of the body and mind, likewise. The mind aspect of it needs equal attention and effort, as the physical part.

**Biography**

Aalapti Singh is currently pursuing her Doctoral Research in the area of Psycho-oncology in India. She is interested in the areas of distress screening and management among oncology staff to help reduce burnout.

aalapti.singh@gmail.com

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