

Mitra Sandesh

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I CAN & I WILL

Pain is a unpleasant physical feeling. Only you can describe your pain. Often people undergoing cancer treatment feel easily discouraged when in pain. Some people start feeling hopeless, helpless, angry, anxious, frightened. This impacts their mood and some people feel depressed and withdraw themselves. Cancer pain management is an essential part of the treatment. Therefore it is important to highlight your pain to the doctor and not just try to put up with it. That would help minimize and best manage your pain.

“ Accept cancer is painful, pray for the strength to endure it. ”

Amar Bhaskar



CHRONIC PAIN MANAGEMENT & RELIEF -

Dr. Raghavendra Ramanjulu

MBBS, MD, DNB, Lead Consultant - Palliative Medicine & Rehabilitation - Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore

Dr. Raghavendra started the session with the objective to cover more on awareness about chronic pain conditions as well as what can actually be done differently with advancements in the science of pain management. What is pain? Pain is whatever the patient says it hurts! It is as simple as that. What is chronic pain? The simplest answer in common terms “pain lasting for more than the time of healing”! He further elaborated that pain lasting for over 3 months is declared chronic in nature. Study of global ageing and adult health have revealed that one in every two individuals will have some chronic pain and women are more affected than men.

Most people are unaware that chronic pain management is a specialised area in clinical science and is mostly anaesthetics who are involved in the treatment. 80% of the individuals during their

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lifetime are affected by chronic neck and low back pain and is the most common symptom. This pain is caused mainly due to posture and degenerations of knees, back spine. Chronic pain starts affecting physical and then psychological and into social aspects relationships as well and people start developing depression. Post covid there is spike in back pain that too in young individuals. This is mainly because we are sitting too much. Sedentary lifestyle starts affecting your spine and neck region.

Now in the current generation of tablets and iPads there are several postures and some of us even watch a complete movie on a phone for over 3 hours in various wrong postures. The gadget which actually makes us all more comfortable is something which comes across at cost of our health. Dr Raghavendra shared several visuals of the gadgets usage and postures that are affecting our health and causing chronic pain.

Dr Raghavendra further explained how chronic pain is undiagnosed, undertreated, and unsupported and more than 50% have no access to chronic pain management services which is a speciality of treatment.

All of us know that we try to solve the apparent symptoms with pain killers. These drugs affect the kidney, heart, liver, and lung if taken over a long period of time to suppress pain. Proper diagnosis is essential and critical in chronic pain management.

Generally in chronic pain management it is a team that works with the patient, the doctor, the psychologist and the physiotherapist. Today's modern medicine is to fix the root cause of pain. The approach is to take a holistic view and take into account physical, mental and social aspects under considerations rather than one prescriptive medicine.

Dr Raghavendra explained the various methods of treatments available today for chronic pain management using several case studies. He explained how migraine headache was caused due to improper neck and sitting posture and several other examples were used to explain the personalised interdisciplinary management and specific interventions.

Mitra Article



SAILING ON DARK ROCKY SEAS WITHOUT LIGHTHOUSES– LIFE AFTER A RARE CANCER DIAGNOSIS **Dr. Swaroop**

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Rare cancers, by their very nature, present a unique and daunting challenge for those diagnosed, their families, and the medical community as well. Defined as cancers that occur in fewer than six cases per 100,000 individuals annually, rare cancers constitute a diverse group of over 200 different types. Despite their scarcity, put together they account for upto 10% of all cancer diagnoses worldwide. However, these cancers often remain neglected by the media and academia, which tends to focus on more common types like breast, lung, or prostate cancer.

This lack of awareness is coupled with insufficient research funding, leading to limited understanding and fewer treatment options. Given the limited data on rare cancers, clinical trials often represent a critical opportunity for accessing cutting-edge treatments. Websites like ClinicalTrials.gov list ongoing trials and can be a valuable resource for finding studies tailored to their condition. Do not hesitate to ask your oncologist for information regarding ongoing and recruiting clinical trials for the specific rare cancer in question.

Patients with rare cancers will usually be offered molecular testing and genetic counseling, as some rare cancers may have hereditary components. Understanding the genetic basis of the cancer can guide treatment options and inform family members about their own risks.

Advocacy and self-advocacy are crucial. Patients and their families should not hesitate to push for the best possible care and seek out healthcare providers willing to collaborate on innovative treatment approaches.

It is always important to be treated by an oncologist who is willing to honestly acknowledge the specific challenges which rare cancers entail. Maintaining detailed records of all medical appointments, treatments, and test results is essential for continuity of care.

Patients should strive to educate themselves about their specific type of cancer. Western resources such as the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) and the Rare Cancer Alliance provide valuable online information and online support networks.

In addition, the Mitra CanCare Foundation does realize the paucity of resources with respect to rare cancers in India, and is in the process of formulating guidance and support groups for patients with rare cancers. The goal is to make patients feel less isolated and more empowered.

In conclusion, while the journey with a rare cancer diagnosis is fraught with challenges, informed and proactive steps can significantly improve the quality of care and outcomes. By leveraging expert opinions, staying informed, participating in clinical trials, and seeking support, patients can navigate this difficult path with greater resilience and hope.

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