

Mitra Sandesh

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I CAN & I WILL

Cancer recurrence is an overwhelming experience that causes significant anxiety, disrupting daily life and mental well-being. In many ways it is like starting the battle all over again both medically and mentally. Many feel it is a reset back to square one and start blaming fate, in reality, it is not so. Although the fear of uncertainty does not change, however you have the unique advantage of your own invaluable experience and the advantage of rapid medial advancements and this could open up new options for better cancer treatment.

“ Never hesitate to start all over again, that gives you the edge to make the difference.” ”

Amar Bhaskar



ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CHILDHOOD CANCER 

DR. ANAND K C

Consultant and HoD, Paediatric Oncology and BMT
Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Center,
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The Mitra Cancare Foundation organized the Swasth Mitra Webinar on 14th February 2026 for Childhood Cancer Awareness on the occasion of International Childhood Cancer Day. The theme for the year's awareness campaign was "Challenge to Change," emphasizing the need to improve awareness, early diagnosis, and access to treatment. The session was delivered by Dr. Anand KC, a pediatric oncology specialist, and the webinar began with an introduction by Boopathi Palanivelu. Dr Anand spoke about creating awareness about childhood cancer, its warning signs, treatment options, and the challenges faced by patients and their families.

During the session, Dr. Anand highlighted the global burden of childhood cancer, noting that around 300,000 children die every year worldwide due to cancer. In India alone, it is estimated that

approximately 75,000 children below the age of 19 are diagnosed with cancer each year. Among childhood cancers, leukemia (blood cancer) is the most common type, followed by brain tumors. Dr. Anand explained that significant progress has been made in pediatric oncology over the last five decades. Survival rates have improved dramatically—from around 20% about 50 years ago to more than 80% today—thanks to advances in medical technology, improved treatment protocols, the availability of specialized doctors and nurses, and support from philanthropic organizations. However, these high survival rates are mostly seen in high-income countries. In India, survival rates are still lower mainly due to late diagnosis, limited pediatric oncology facilities, and lack of awareness.

Unlike adult cancers, which are often associated with aging, lifestyle habits, and environmental risk factors, childhood cancers usually occur without clear risk factors, except in a few cases where genetic conditions may contribute. Because of this, childhood cancers cannot easily be screened or prevented, which often results in diagnosis at more advanced stages.

Dr. Anand emphasized the importance of recognizing

early warning signs such as fever lasting more than seven days, unexplained bleeding in the skin or joints, headaches accompanied by early morning vomiting, swelling in the neck or abdomen, bone or joint pain with swelling, and a white reflex in the eye. Treatment for childhood cancer typically involves chemotherapy (often administered on an outpatient basis), surgery for tumor removal, and radiotherapy, which is often used after surgery. With proper and timely treatment, many childhood cancers can be cured completely, allowing children to live normal lives.

The session also highlighted the challenges faced by families, including financial burden, relocation for treatment, and infection risks during therapy. Hospitals like Shankara Cancer Hospitals, along with NGOs and government schemes, provide financial, social, and educational support, including helping children return to school after treatment.

The key takeaway from the webinar was clear: early diagnosis and timely medical intervention greatly improve the chances of curing childhood cancer. Parents and caregivers should consult a doctor immediately if any warning signs appear.