



ADVANCING COMMUNITY BASED DETECTION AND PREVENTION OF CANCER IN REMOTE AREAS

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ABSTRACT

In India, cancer is still a major public health issue and treatment expenses and death are greatly raised by delayed detection. The Cancer Care Project was started to increase prompt treatment, encouraging early detection and strengthen community based cancer prevention among rural communities. Through systematic screening, awareness raising, referral services, and treatment support, the project focuses on the early diagnosis of oral, breast, and cervical cancers. Total 29,401 recipients had been screened, reaching 29.40% of the project's total goal of 100,000 people. The success of structured population based cancer screening was demonstrated by the identification and referral of thirty-two confirmed cancer cases for proper therapy. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to combine healthcare services with community engagement in order to lower the cancer burden in underprivileged areas.

KEYWORDS: Breast Cancer, Cervical Cancer, Health, Rural Communities.

INTRODUCTION

In India, cancer is becoming one of the most serious non-communicable diseases that afflict both rural and urban people. Although treatment outcomes have improved as a result of medical science advancements, many patients still appear at advanced stages because of low awareness, difficult access to screening programs and delayed diagnosis. A significant amount of the cancer burden in the country is caused by oral, breast, and cervical cancers, which are mostly preventable or treatable when caught early. The Project was started to create a comprehensive community based paradigm for cancer prevention and early detection throughout Maharashtra districts of Ahilyanagar, Dharashiv, and Sambhajanagar in recognition of this pressing healthcare need. To enhance health outcomes for vulnerable rural people, the project integrates therapeutic support, large-scale screening, referral mechanisms, and awareness-raising.

METHODS & STUDY DESIGN

The Ahilyanagar, Dharashiv, and Sambhajanagar districts of Maharashtra participated in the two years “Cancer Care Project Study” performed by “Saidham Foundation”. The project's main goal was to help 100,000 people by providing thorough cancer screening and prompt intervention. It was committed to cancer prevention, early detection, screening, and treatment support. To guarantee full patient support, the project used a thorough continuum of care approach that goes beyond cancer screening. Comprehensive community mobilization and health education initiatives aimed at raising knowledge of cancer risk factors, early warning indicators, and the significance of routine screening were the first steps in its implementation approach. Population based screening for cervical, breast and oral cancers were performed for the early detection of people with suspected tumors. Referrals to specialized healthcare facilities for diagnostic confirmation were made quickly

for beneficiaries who need additional examination. Following this, they received assistance and support in obtaining the necessary treatment services. The project guarantees continuity of care and greatly increased the possibility of better clinical outcomes and lower cancer related morbidity and mortality by combining awareness generation, early detection, prompt referral, diagnosis, and treatment facilitation into a single coordinated framework.

RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

In all three implementation areas, 29,401 participants received cancer screenings during the reporting period. This shows successful community involvement in preventive healthcare programs and constitutes a major advancement during the project's initial implementation phase. The observations made during this study are depicted in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Observed cancer cases during the project study.

Cancer Types	Observed Cases
Oral Cancer	7
Breast Cancer	15
Cervical Cancer	10
Total	32

Total 29,401 people were screened through planned community based cancer screening camps. 32 verified cases of cancer that needed specialized care were found. Cervical cancer (31.3%) and mouth cancer (21.8%) were the next most common causes of verified cases, after breast cancer (46.9%). These instances were found through systematic screening, which allowed for prompt referral for proper treatment planning and diagnostic confirmation.

In rural communities, the effort has produced quantifiable advancements in early detection and cancer prevention. Study observed early detection of cervical, breast, and oral cancers before the disease progresses to an advanced stage. Study observed greater understanding of lifestyle related risk factors, cancer symptoms and the significance of routine screening in the community. Study improved underprivileged people's access to expert diagnostic and treatment services.

By raising awareness and boosting participation in cancer screening programs, this Cancer Care Project has greatly improved preventive oncology care in rural areas. Early warning signals, tobacco-related dangers, breast self-examination, cervical cancer prevention and the significance of prompt medical consultation have all been spread throughout the rural community. By increasing access to breast and cervical cancer screening services, the project has helped women in particular by tackling two significant causes of cancer-related morbidity among Indian women.

Major Achievements of Project Study

- ✓ Organized community mobilization and comprehensive awareness campaigns have been implemented successfully in three districts.
- ✓ Study significantly increased access to preventive healthcare by screening around 30,000 beneficiaries.
- ✓ Study posed better communication between referral hospitals, screening teams and community health workers.
- ✓ Study developed successful referral system that reduces delays in diagnosis and the start of therapy.
- ✓ Study increased public knowledge through health education programs about the preventability of oral, breast, and cervical cancers.

Impact on Public Health

Study suggested that population based cancer screening is essential to lowering cancer-related mortality. By integrating awareness rising, screening, referral, and treatment support into a single integrated framework, this Cancer Care Project shows how community centered interventions can successfully close healthcare gaps in rural areas. The multidisciplinary strategy of the project supports equitable access to cancer care for marginalized communities and is consistent with national initiatives for non communicable disease prevention.

Future Scopes

- Increased screening coverage for the remaining eligible groups may give broader understating for future.
- Community education and behavior modification initiatives must be added in study protocol.
- Digital methods for tracking and monitoring beneficiaries can be integrated in future for better outcomes.
- Ensuring that referred beneficiaries stick to their treatment plans and receive full diagnostic confirmation so to achieve full benefits of study.
- Strengthening ties between tertiary cancer centers and district hospitals may be a good strategy for future perspective.
- Tracking survival and long term patient outcomes after early diagnosis is the key of futuristic success in such types of projects.

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CONCLUSION

In the Maharashtra districts of Ahilyanagar, Dharashiv, and Sambhajinagar, the SBIF Cancer Care Project has built a solid basis for community based cancer prevention and early detection. Total 29,401 people, or 29.40% of the project's total objective, were screened during the first implementation phase. The discovery of 32 confirmed cancer cases, including 10 cervical, 15 breast, and 7 oral cancers, showed how successful organized screening helps in promoting prompt diagnosis

and treatment. Beyond measurable results, the project has increased vulnerable rural people's access to specialized cancer services, enhanced referral networks, and raised community awareness. It is anticipated that ongoing deployment will significantly lower diagnostic delays and improve cancer-related health outcomes throughout the region.

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