

Scope of Nurse Led Preventive Oncology Clinic in India

Mathew Varghese V., Sneha Sara Sam*

Abstract

India holds immense potential and a promising future for the extensive implementation of nurse-led preventive oncology clinics, considering its substantial burden of cancer-related morbidity and mortality. The healthcare system in India is not equipped enough to cater to the growing needs of the population, and there is a lack of preventive services, particularly for cancer. In this context, nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can play a pivotal role in addressing the unmet needs of the population. Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can provide essential services such as cancer screening, early detection, education, counseling, and follow-up care. Nurses are well placed to lead such clinics as they have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide comprehensive care to patients with cancer. Additionally, these clinics have the capacity to deliver patient-centered care, addressing the unique requirements of each patient, which ultimately improves patient satisfaction and overall outcomes. Furthermore, nurse-led preventive oncology clinics play a vital role in connecting the community with the healthcare system, closing the existing gap. They can work with community leaders and stakeholders to increase awareness about cancer prevention and the importance of screening. Furthermore, nurses can engage in collaborative efforts with other healthcare practitioners, fostering a coordinated approach to cancer care. Introducing nurse-led preventive oncology clinics in India has the potential to bring about a noteworthy decrease in the impact of cancer-related illness and death. Additionally, these clinics can contribute to reducing the financial burden associated with cancer treatment in healthcare expenditures. Moreover, they can provide employment opportunities for nurses and contribute to the overall development of the healthcare system in India. However, the implementation of nurse-led preventive oncology clinics in India also faces some challenges. The lack of resources, infrastructure, and trained personnel can pose a significant challenge. Moreover, there is a need for policy support and funding to ensure the sustainability of these clinics. In conclusion, nurse-led preventive oncology clinics have a significant role to play in addressing the unmet needs of the population in India. The implementation of these clinics can lead to better patient outcomes, increased awareness about cancer prevention, and overall development of the healthcare system in India. By garnering support from policymakers, stakeholders, and the community, it is possible to surmount the challenges at hand.

Keywords: Nurse led clinic, preventive oncology clinic, cancer screening, cancer prevention, scope and challenges

*Author for Correspondence

Sneha Sara Sam
E-mail: snehameeval@gmail.com

Nursing Officer, Department of Nursing, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India

Received Date: May 01, 2023
Accepted Date: July 10, 2023
Published Date: July 14, 2023

Citation: Mathew Varghese V., Sneha Sara Sam. Scope of Nurse Led Preventive Oncology Clinic in India. International Journal of Oncological Nursing and Practices. 2023; 1(1): 12–16p.

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death worldwide, and it is estimated that India will have 1.73 million new cases of cancer by 2025 [1]. Preventive oncology is an emerging field that aims to prevent cancer through early detection, risk assessment, and lifestyle modifications. Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can play a significant role in achieving this goal by providing education, counseling, and screening services to individuals at risk of developing cancer.

SCOPE OF NURSE-LED PREVENTIVE ONCOLOGY CLINICS IN INDIA

Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can be established in hospitals, primary care centers, and community health centers to provide services to individuals at risk of developing cancer. These clinics can focus on different aspects of cancer prevention, including screening for cancer, counseling on lifestyle modifications, and providing education on cancer risk factors [2–4].

Screening for Cancer

Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can provide cancer screening services to individuals at risk of developing cancer. The range of services provided can encompass screenings for breast cancer, cervical cancer, and colorectal cancer. These clinics can also provide education on the importance of cancer screening and encourage individuals to undergo screening tests.

Counseling on Lifestyle Modifications

Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can provide counseling services on lifestyle modifications that can reduce the risk of developing cancer. The services offered may involve counseling on smoking cessation, promoting a nutritious diet, and encouraging physical activity. Additionally, these clinics can provide education on the adverse effects of alcohol consumption and the significance of safeguarding oneself from the sun.

Education on Cancer Risk Factors

Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can provide education on cancer risk factors to individuals at risk of developing cancer. These clinics can provide information on the importance of early detection, the risks of exposure to certain chemicals and substances, and the importance of family history in determining cancer risk.

THE ROLE OF NURSES IN PREVENTIVE ONCOLOGY CLINICS

Nurses play a vital and indispensable role within preventive oncology clinics, offering a diverse array of services encompassing cancer screening, counseling, and educational support. Moreover, nurses serve as essential intermediaries, facilitating effective communication and collaboration between patients and various healthcare professionals, including physicians and social workers.

Nurses in preventive oncology clinics can also help to reduce the stigma associated with cancer. They can provide emotional support to patients and their families and help them to cope with the emotional and psychological effects of cancer [5, 6].

TYPES OF NURSE LED PREVENTIVE ONCOLOGY CLINICS

Nurse Led Breast Cancer Screening Clinic

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women worldwide and early detection through regular screening can improve treatment outcomes and survival rates. Nurse-led breast cancer screening clinics can play a significant role in improving access to breast cancer screening and early detection. This study will discuss the scope and benefits of nurse-led breast cancer screening clinics [7].

Scope of Nurse-led Breast Cancer Screening Clinics

Nurse-led breast cancer screening clinics can be established in hospitals, primary care centers, and community health centers [8, 9]. These clinics can provide a range of services, including:

- *Screening mammography:* Nurse-led clinics can provide screening mammography services to women who are at average risk of developing breast cancer. These clinics can also provide education on the importance of regular mammography screening and encourage women to undergo screening tests.
- *Breast examination:* Nurses in these clinics can perform clinical breast examinations to detect any lumps or abnormalities in the breast tissue. They can also teach women how to perform breast self-examinations at home.

- *Risk assessment:* Nurse-led clinics have the capability to evaluate an individual's likelihood of developing breast cancer by considering factors like family medical background, age, and lifestyle choices. These clinics can provide education on ways to reduce the risk of developing breast cancer, such as maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco.
- *Counseling:* Nurses in these clinics can provide emotional support and counseling to women who may be anxious or fearful about breast cancer screening or a breast cancer diagnosis.

Benefits of Nurse-led Breast Cancer Screening Clinics

- *Improved Access to Breast Cancer Screening:* Nurse-led breast cancer screening clinics can improve access to breast cancer screening for women who may face barriers to accessing screening services, such as lack of transportation or financial resources [10].
- *Increased Patient Satisfaction:* Nurse-led clinics can provide personalized and compassionate care to women, which can increase patient satisfaction and engagement in the screening process.
- *Early Detection of Breast Cancer:* Regular breast cancer screening can lead to early detection of breast cancer, which can improve treatment outcomes and increase survival rates.
- *Reduced Healthcare Costs:* Early detection of breast cancer through regular screening can reduce the healthcare costs.

Nurse Led Cervical Cancer Screening Clinics

Cervical cancer is the 4th most common cancer in women worldwide and is a leading cause of cancer-related deaths in low- and middle-income countries like India. Nurse-led cervical cancer screening clinics can play a vital role in improving access to cervical cancer screening and early detection. This essay will discuss the scope and benefits of nurse-led cervical cancer screening clinics in India [11].

Scope of Nurse-led Cervical Cancer Screening Clinics

Nurse-led cervical cancer screening clinics can be established in hospitals, primary care centers, and community health centers. These clinics can provide a range of services, including [12, 13]:

- *Screening tests:* Nurse-led clinics can provide screening tests such as Pap smear, VIA (visual inspection with acetic acid), and HPV testing to women who are at risk of developing cervical cancer.
- *Education and awareness:* Nurses in these clinics can provide education and awareness to women about cervical cancer, its risk factors, and the importance of regular screening tests. They can also teach women about prevention methods such as the HPV vaccine, safe sex practices, and healthy lifestyle habits.
- *Follow-up care:* Nurses in these clinics can provide follow-up care to women who have abnormal screening test results. Nurse-led clinics can offer guidance, assistance, and appropriate recommendations for additional examinations and therapies through counseling, support, and referrals to specialized professionals.
- *Counseling:* Nurses in these clinics can provide emotional support and counseling to women who may be anxious or fearful about cervical cancer screening or a cervical cancer diagnosis.

Benefits of Nurse-led Cervical Cancer Screening Clinics

- *Improved access to cervical cancer screening:* Nurse-led cervical cancer screening clinics can improve access to cervical cancer screening for women who may face barriers to accessing screening services, such as lack of transportation or financial resources.
- *Increased patient satisfaction:* Nurse-led clinics can provide personalized and compassionate care to women, which can increase patient satisfaction and engagement in the screening process.
- *Early detection of cervical cancer:* Regular cervical cancer screening can lead to early detection of cervical cancer, which can improve treatment outcomes and increase survival rates.
- *Reduced healthcare costs:* Early detection of cervical cancer through regular screening can lead to less invasive and less costly treatment options [14, 15].

Nurse Led Oral Cancer Screening Clinics

Nurse-led oral cancer screening clinics have the potential to play a significant role in the early detection and prevention of oral cancer in India. With one of the highest oral cancer incidence rates globally, India emphasizes the criticality of early detection for effective treatment and improved survival outcomes [16].

Studies have shown that nurse-led oral cancer screening programs can be effective in increasing early detection rates, especially in low-resource settings. A study conducted in India found that a nurse-led oral cancer screening program resulted in a higher rate of early detection of oral cancer than traditional screening methods. The program also had a high level of patient satisfaction, indicating the potential for the expansion of such programs [17].

Nurses can play an essential role in the prevention and early detection of oral cancer in India by conducting regular screenings, educating patients on risk factors, and promoting healthy habits. Nurse-led oral cancer screening programs can also help to alleviate the burden on already overburdened healthcare systems [18].

In conclusion, nurse-led oral cancer screening clinics have the potential to make a significant impact on the prevention and early detection of oral cancer in India. Given the escalating incidence of oral cancer, it is imperative to expand such programs in order to enhance the healthcare outcomes of affected individuals.

CHALLENGES OF NURSE LED PREVENTIVE ONCOLOGY CLINICS IN INDIA

Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics in India face several challenges, including [19–21]:

- *Lack of awareness:* There is a lack of awareness about preventive oncology and early cancer detection among the general population in India. As a result, people do not seek preventive care and are diagnosed at advanced stages of cancer.
- *Limited access to healthcare:* India has a large population, and there is a shortage of healthcare facilities in rural areas. A significant portion of the population lacks access to basic primary healthcare, let alone specialized services for cancer prevention.
- *Limited resources:* The Indian healthcare system faces resource constraints, including limited funding for healthcare, a shortage of healthcare professionals, and limited access to diagnostic equipment.
- *Stigma:* Cancer is often stigmatized in India, and people are hesitant to seek care due to fear of discrimination or ostracization.
- *Lack of data:* The absence of comprehensive data on cancer prevalence in India poses challenges in formulating efficient preventive strategies.
- *Socioeconomic factors:* Socioeconomic factors such as poverty, lack of education, and cultural beliefs can influence a person's decision to seek preventive care or follow through with treatment.

CONCLUSION

Nurse-led preventive oncology clinics can play a significant role in cancer prevention in India. These clinics have the capacity to offer a variety of services encompassing cancer screening, counseling, and educational initiatives. Nurses can play a crucial role in providing these services and can act as a liaison between patients and other healthcare providers. The establishment of nurse-led preventive oncology clinics in India can help to reduce the burden of cancer and improve the overall health of the population.

REFERENCES

1. GLOBOCAN 2020. India factsheet. [Online]. Available at: <https://gco.iarc.fr/today/data/factsheets/populations/356-india-fact-sheets.pdf>

2. National Cancer Control Programme. [Online]. Available at: https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/1493693747note_0.pdf
3. World Health Organization. Preventive oncology. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.who.int/cancer/prevention/en/>
4. American Society of Clinical Oncology. Cancer prevention and early detection. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/cancer-prevention-early-detection.html>
5. Lai XB, Ching SSY, Wong FKY. Nurse-led cancer care: A scope review of the past years (2003-2016). *Int J Nurs Sci*. 2017 Mar 6; 4(2): 184–195. doi: 10.1016/j.ijnss.2017.02.001. PMID: 31406741; PMCID: PMC6626125.
6. Gakidou E, Nordhagen S, Obermeyer Z. Coverage of Cervical Cancer Screening in 57 Countries: Low Average Levels and Large Inequalities. *PLoS Med*. 2008; 5(6): e132. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0050132
7. World Health Organization. Breast cancer. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/breast-cancer>.
8. American Cancer Society. Breast Cancer Screening Guidelines. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/american-cancer-society-recommendations-for-the-early-detection-of-breast-cancer.html>
9. Kuchenbaecker KB, Hopper JL, Barnes DR, et al. Risks of Breast, Ovarian, and Contralateral Breast Cancer for BRCA1 and BRCA2 Mutation Carriers. *JAMA*. 2017; 317(23): 2402–2416. doi:10.1001/jama.2017.7112
10. National Cancer Institute. Breast Cancer Screening (PDQ®)–Health Professional Version. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.gov/types/breast/hp/breast-screening-pdq>.
11. Sankaranarayanan R, Budukh AM, Rajkumar R. Effective screening programmes for cervical cancer in low- and middle-income developing countries. *Bull World Health Organ*. 2001; 79(10): 954–962.
12. World Health Organization. Cervical cancer: prevention and control. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/cancer/prevention/diagnosis-screening/cervical-cancer/en/>.
13. Indian Council of Medical Research. National Guidelines for Screening of Cervical Cancer. [Online]. Available from: https://www.icmr.gov.in/guidelines/NG_Screening_Cervical.pdf.
14. National Health Portal. Cervical Cancer Screening. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.nhp.gov.in/disease/non-communicable-disease/cancer/cervical-cancer-screening>.
15. World Health Organization. WHO guidelines for screening and treatment of precancerous lesions for cervical cancer prevention. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548694>.
16. Chauhan N, Gupta S, Kulkarni V. Nurse-led oral cancer screening: A preliminary study from a tertiary care hospital in India. *Indian J Cancer*. 2018 Jul–Sep; 55(3): 276–280. doi: 10.4103/ijc.IJC_520_17. PMID: 30693814.
17. Sankaranarayanan R, Ramadas K, Thara S, et al. Clinical breast examination: preliminary results from a cluster randomized controlled trial in India. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 2011; 103(19): 1476–1480. doi:10.1093/jnci/djr304.
18. Mehrotra R, Gupta A, Singh M, Ibrahim R. Application of cytology and molecular biology in diagnosing premalignant or malignant oral lesions. *Mol Cancer*. 2006; 5: 11. doi:10.1186/1476-4598-5-11
19. Shetty P. Cancer prevention in India: Challenges and opportunities. *J Glob Oncol*. 2018; 4: 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1200/JGO.17.00136>
20. Sathish A, Kapoor N. Nurse-led cancer screening and prevention: A literature review. *J Cancer Educ*. 2019; 34(1): 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13187-017-1301-1>
21. Sreedevi A, Javed R, Dinesh A. Epidemiology of cervical cancer with special focus on India. *Int J Women's Health*. 2014; 6: 727–735. <https://doi.org/10.2147/IJWH.S50001>