



CAN CURE

Issue 19. July - Dec 2025

Can Cure is the Nag Foundation's Newsletter that helps create awareness about various issues related to Cancer and its treatment. It is an opportunity for our members, both doctors and patients, to share their insights and testimonies with you.

Our Vision: From Cancer Care to Cure

Our Mission: Promoting Excellence in Cancer Care through Education, Research, Advocacy and Support.

Invited Article

Q & A with Dr Prerana Kulkarni, MD. Gynaecology

Cervical Cancer in India is still a major public health issue, primarily caused by a persistent, long lasting infection of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

It is the third most common cancer, with poor prognosis but prevention can be as simple as a vaccine.

1. What is the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine protects against infection from the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the leading cause of Cervical Cancer, Vaginal and Vulvar Cancers, Anal Cancer, Oral Cancers, and Genital warts.

2. How does the HPV vaccine work?

The vaccine helps the body develop immunity to fight HPV infections, thereby preventing HPV-related cancers and warts. It is most effective when given before exposure to the virus, ideally before the start of sexual activity.

3. What HPV vaccines are available in India?

The following vaccines are available:

- **Cervarix** – Bivalent vaccine
- **Gardasil 4** – Quadrivalent vaccine
- **Cervavac** – Indian-made quadrivalent vaccine
- **Gardasil 9** – Nonavalent (nine-valency) vaccine

4. Who should receive the HPV vaccine?

The vaccine is recommended for girls and boys aged 9 years and above.

Ages 9-14: Two doses, with the second dose 6-12 months after the first.

Ages 15-26: Three doses are recommended over six months.

Ages 27-45: Adults in this age range should discuss the benefits with their doctor, as they may still benefit.

5. Is the HPV vaccine included in the National Immunisation Program?

The Government of India is working towards including the HPV vaccine in the National Immunisation Program. Currently, it is available in both public and private healthcare facilities.

6. Who should not take the HPV vaccine?

The vaccine should be avoided by:

- Pregnant women
- Individuals with life-threatening allergies
- People who are severely ill (vaccination should be delayed until recovery)

7. How is the HPV vaccine given?

The vaccine is given as an intramuscular injection in the upper arm and is generally well tolerated. Side effects are usually mild and temporary, such as dizziness, nausea, pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site.

Survivorship and Rehabilitation Activities in the last 6 months

Cancer survivorship focuses on all aspects of wellness, starting from the moment of diagnosis and continues for the remainder of their lives. The Foundation is committed to helping patients and their caregivers manage treatment, side effects, recurrence fears, emotional and psychological traumas and physical challenges of cancer before and after treatment

Lymphoedema Clinic: This helps patients understand, manage and treat arm swelling caused by surgery and/or radiation. Post-surgery exercises are taught to new patients. **OUR REACH:** 80 patients

Cancer-Education: Combines education and psychological support to patients, survivors and caregivers. Our counsellors and/or social workers interact with patients to address psychological, social, behavioural, emotional and spiritual impacts of the diagnosis. **OUR REACH:** 600 patients

Support Group: The "Breast Friends" Support Group meets once a month to help patients and survivors connect with each other to help them in their journey through Cancer. **No. of Meetings:** 5



OUR HIGHLIGHTS THIS YEAR

The **Jameel Arts and Health Lab**, a global initiative launched by the **World Health Organization**, is filming the role of art in health stories around the world. The work that has been done at the Oncology department of the Sahyadri Multispecialty Hospital, Hadapsar in association with **Akshata Parekh**, our expressive Arts therapist, was showcased through **Manjusha Chordia's** journey through cancer.

This film was telecast at the UN general assembly in September 2025.

Here is the link to the video: <https://youtu.be/KxTToa-ARGc?si=NP2ggnPukCCesO3n>



The 13th Indian Breast Cancer Survivors Conference 2025

An idea conceived over an informal lunch, which sprang from the desire to go beyond just treatment for their patients, **Dr Shona Nag**, Trustee, Nag Foundation and **Dr Sudeep Gupta**, President, Women's Cancer Initiative, came up with the idea of a Survivors Conference to address issues related to life after cancer. The conference meant to address physical, emotional, psychological, social aspects of survivorship. Incepted in 2013, the conference has grown both in content and reach. 2025 saw our **13th** conference take place on the 8th of November.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference began with the launch of the new logo of Nag Foundation by Mitali Zahaan Irani. The logo reflects the strength of three generation of women dedicated to the mission, nurtured by purpose, guided by wisdom, and full of compassion.

Our Chief Guest **Mr Ashwini Malhotra**, Vice Chairman & Managing Director of Weikfield Foods Pvt. Ltd., whose support to the foundation has been immense, spoke of lessons learnt from cancer survivors. He also greatly appreciated the work the foundation does. **Mona Seervai**, a donor and survivor from Mumbai who financially supports the various initiatives of the Foundation, was also present. The lighting of the samay by Dr Shona Nag, Mitali Zahaan Irani, Harendra Godambe (C.L. Kirloskar CSR Foundation), Ashwini Malhotra, and Mona Seervai marked the beginning of the conference.



The conference focuses on **life after Breast Cancer treatment**. The program addresses physical recovery, emotional well-being, relationships, nutrition, mental health, and long-term follow-up care, while creating a supportive space for sharing experiences and hope.

With over **150 survivors** and **25 caregivers**, in a non-judgmental environment, survivors were able to speak openly, ask questions, and be heard.



We would also like to acknowledge **our team of survivor-volunteers** who gave their time and talent to prepare a beautiful hamper which was presented to the faculty as a sign of appreciation and gratitude.



Our immense gratitude goes out to all our faculty who gave their time and their expertise to guide our participants through this next phase in their lives.

Advocacy & Awareness

Awareness programmes are important because they inform, educate, and empower individuals to change health behaviours. In the last six months, 3 awareness and 1 screening camps were held at corporations

like Sigma Engineered Solutions and Wadia College, Pune.



If you are interested in promoting Cancer Awareness and Screening within your organisation, mail us at admin@nagfoundation.org



STIGMAS AND CULTURAL NUANCES EXPERIENCED BY PATIENTS – D'SOUZA REBECCA, DR. NAG

BACKGROUND

Stigma is set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or a group of people have about something. Cancer Stigmas impacts preventive screening, treatment decisions, mental health, relationships within and outside

METHODS

A mixed-method study, a list of stigmas was finalized after detailed discussions with patients, survivors, caregivers, mental health professionals and oncologists. A survey questionnaire was administered.

The survey had 4 sections, demographics, stigmas, Dr. Beck's Anxiety and Depression scale.

The survey questionnaire was in English and Marathi.

A semi structure interview of random patients / survivors was also conducted.

RESULT

Total No of Participants 108, Median age 50 years (23.5 - 78.5). Median years of survival 4 years (6mts to 30yrs) 62.03 % were married 56.48 % were homemakers while 41.6 % were employed 62.03 % self diagnosed their disease 76.85% experienced some sort of stigma. 19.44% experienced anxiety and 22.2% experienced moderate to severe depression. The most common stigma was about health screening behaviours, 46.29 patients felt that people avoided health screening for fear of being diagnosed with cancer, 29.62% avoided revealing their diagnosis because they would be treated differently. 28.70% experienced social isolation because others believe that cancer can spread from person to person

CONCLUSION & THE WAY FORWARD

Awareness programs to address various stigmas and cultural myths that impacts health seeking behaviours. Survivorship programs can include stigmas and their impact on mental health. While measuring quality of life, including the various stigmas and their impact will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychosocial challenges faced by patients.



Conference Participation

The 2025 World Congress of the International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS) with the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia (COSA) was held from November 11th - 14th at the Adelaide Convention Centre, Australia, and focused on advances in psychosocial care, survivorship, and cancer treatment.

Rebecca D'souza presented her study on *"Stigmas and Cultural Nuances experienced by Patients"*.



Biomarkers and Precision Oncology Forum: Singapore, 30th July.

Dr Shona Nag attended and co-organised the BPOF Congress, which stands as a premier global oncology platform, bringing together clinicians, researchers, patient advocates, journalists, and healthcare industry representatives from around the world.

Excellence in Oncology Care Conference and Exhibition: Dubai, UAE, 31st October-1st November.

Dr Shona Nag was an invited speaker for the EOIC annual cancer conference. It is a platform for global and regional experts to share, learn, and discuss advancements in cancer care, including nursing, imaging, and immunotherapy.

Integrated Association of Supportive Care in Cancer Conference: Mumbai, 29th November.

Dr Shona Nag chaired the session on *'From Anorexia to Cachexia – Addressing Nutrition-Related Symptoms in Cancer (Optimizing nutrition and symptom management to improve outcomes and quality of life)'*. The conference was organized in collaboration with the Nag Foundation and Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC).





'कृतज्ञता' (With Gratitude)



"When I was suffering from tongue cancer and undergoing chemotherapy, my family consulted Dr Nag and she offered us some much-needed assistance via the Nag Foundation and sponsored the entire cost of my chemotherapy sessions. The support provided by you to me extended to my family as they were able to breathe freely with relief."

-Yogesh (Cancer Survivor)

We would like to thank:-

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Patient Welfare (July - Dec 2025)

General Aid to Patients – ₹6,37,675/-

If the Nag Foundation has made a difference to the lives of our patients and enabled individuals to reconsider health priorities, it is because of the empathy, support, and the generosity of our patrons and donors.

If you would like to extend your support, your contribution can help fund cancer care, research, and awareness. Our bank details are listed below:

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