



Can Cure

Why Clinical Research is Important: A Clinician's Perspective

Apart from treating patients, clinicians also help:

- Identify important clinical questions.
- Recruit and educate patients about research studies.
- Ensure ethical conduct and patient safety.
- Collect high-quality clinical data.
- Translate research findings into routine practice.



From a clinician's perspective, clinical research is not separate from patient care, it is an extension of it. It transforms everyday clinical observations into scientific evidence, enabling clinicians to provide safer, more effective, and more compassionate care while shaping the future of medicine.

In Conversation with Prof. Martin Stockler

For Prof. Martin Stockler, research isn't something people are born knowing how to do, it is a skill that can be learned, developed and refined. As a Professor of Oncology and Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Sydney, Oncology Director at the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, and a practicing Oncologist, he balances caring for patients with research that advances cancer treatment. He says that his career path was never a carefully thought-out plan, rather, his discovery of Oncology later in his medical training led him to where he is today.

Working in Oncology has reinforced to Prof. Stockler his belief that research is the heart of improving patient care. Modern Oncology is built on evidence generated through clinical trials, thus for him, research isn't an optional extra, it is the foundation of better treatment and better patient outcomes. He does, however, also understand the hesitance when it comes to research, for it is a highly challenging field with competitive funding, so on and so forth.

One of the workshop's main goals, he explains, is to help participants take that first step into research. Rather than expecting immediate research expertise, the workshop encourages them to transform an initial idea into a clear research concept and learn how to communicate it effectively. "It's about going from an intuitive idea to something that is potentially a doable research study", he explains. To Prof. Stockler, learning how to organise ideas, ask for feedback and improve your work is just as important as the research itself. He believes these skills benefit researchers at every stage of their careers.

Prof. Stockler's message stands clear—research doesn't have to be intimidating. While the process might seem daunting, it becomes much more rewarding when it is driven with genuine interest and supported by good mentors. "If you find a person to supervise an area you really want to be good at, it stops being research. It's just like you're doing something you're interested in." His advice to aspiring researchers is simple—don't be afraid to start. Every research project begins as nothing more than an idea, and with the right guidance, that idea can grow into something that can make a real difference.

"What Cancer Taught Us"

A cancer diagnosis changes more than a treatment plan, it can change the way we see ourselves, our relationships, our health and even the daily moments we once took for granted. During our recent support group meeting, members came together to reflect on their experience and share the lessons they have learnt throughout their cancer journeys.

One of the most important lessons was the value of living in the present. Cancer can make it very easy to linger on the past and worry about the future, forgetting that life still continues in the present. Many shared that they have learnt to take life one moment at time, to appreciate the present, and make the most of life. As one member put it, "you've been given another chance, so make the most of it."

Living with cancer also brought a deeper understanding of the importance of health and self-care. Eating well, sleeping well, staying active, and paying attention to one's body became priorities rather than things to put off for later. Members spoke about learning to listen to their bodies, acknowledge symptoms, and seek medical advice when something doesn't feel right. Their cancer journeys reminded them that health deserves to be a priority and not an afterthought.

Another lesson was the importance of not allowing cancer to take away the joy of living. While treatment may have brought difficult days, side effects, uncertainty and fear, members emphasized the need to keep going, stay engaged with life, and find reasons to be happy. Keeping busy, remaining positive and making time for oneself, helped many navigate challenging periods; and rather than allowing cancer to become their entire identity, they learned to continue being themselves beyond their diagnosis.

Their journeys also brought lessons in self-love and resilience. They spoke about giving themselves time facing the problems and learning to be more patient with themselves. Cancer taught them that it is okay to ask for help, acknowledge difficult emotions, and take things at their own pace. For some, the experience also encouraged them to be more thoughtful, compassionate, and be willing to help others facing similar challenges.

Perhaps the most powerful lesson was that nothing is permanent. Difficult moments pass, circumstances change, and life continues. Their journeys may not always be easy but it can bring a new perspective, stronger connections, and a renewed appreciation for life.

These reflections remind us that survivorship isn't simply about moving beyond treatment, it is also about discovering new ways of living, caring for ourselves, connecting with others, and finding meaning. For those who have walked through a journey of cancer, it may have changed things but it has also taught to value life, health, relationships and every single moment a little more deeply.

- Tanya D'souza



Survivorship at the Nag Foundation

Survivorship focuses on helping patients achieve the best possible quality of life by addressing the long-term and late side effects of cancer and its treatment, while supporting their overall health and well-being.



FOLLOW-UP CARE

Dr Sibylle Loibl is a renowned gynecological oncologist from Frankfurt, Germany. She is also a clinical researcher in breast cancer and chairs the German Breast Group. She is an author of more than 400 original and peer – reviewed articles and scientific papers. She is involved in developing national and international guidelines for breast cancer.

She was an invited speaker for the **"Year In Review 2026 – the year it was"** held in Mumbai where she graciously accepted our invitation for an informal discussion with a few patients and survivors, and a case based discussion with our oncology students.

"Dr Sibylle shared her knowledge with great clarity and generosity, addressing not only the illness itself, but also guiding us toward long-term wellness and overall wellbeing. What stood out most was her non-judgmental and compassionate approach. She listened to patients' every situation that was shared, and offered both medical and non-medical perspectives, which made the discussion feel safe, balanced and very supportive." **-Pallive Arkile, Survivor.**

"The case presentations supervised by Dr Sibylle helped me improve my clinical reasoning. The discussions encouraged me to think critically about diagnosis and treatment options, and strengthened my confidence in case discussions, and highlighted the importance of evidence-based, multidisciplinary, and patient-centered cancer care." **-Dr Arun, DNB Student.**

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

Managing fatigue, pain, lymphoedema, neuropathy, and restoring physical function through exercise and rehabilitation.

Two sessions were organized by one of our young volunteer's, Miss Maahi Dhole who is also a trained Bharatnatyam dancer, to help our patients with physical training using dance

Lymphoedema rehabilitation sessions are conducted for patients with swelling and pain of the operated arm.



PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

Addressing anxiety, depression, fear of recurrence, body image concerns, and relationship issues.

Individual counselling sessions are a part of the treatment process and are available for patients.

Group sessions are conducted at the Nag Foundation office.

The theme for **World Cancer Day 2026** was **'United by Unique'**. The theme reminded us that Every cancer journey is unique, but together we can ensure that every person receives compassionate, personalised, and equitable care.

Nag Foundation celebrated World Cancer Day on the 3rd of February 2026 with a support group meeting. Keeping to the theme, the meeting started with a talk about how food unites us in our Cancer Journey.

Dr Shuchi Sharma, Nutritionist with Sahyadri Hospital, Shastrinagar discussed healthy options of food for the survivors. Their queries were addressed.

Women's Day was celebrated on 11th March 2026, with an engaging open dialogue titled **"6 Lessons the Big C Taught Me"**, where participants shared personal experiences, insights, and reflections from their cancer journeys. The celebration continued with brain games, entertainment, dance, and fun-filled activities that fostered joy and togetherness. The event concluded with a delicious chaat counter, providing an opportunity for everyone to relax, connect, and celebrate the spirit of resilience and friendship.

Initiatives

PROJECT MASTECTOMY BAGS

Mastectomy Bags are specially designed bags to provide a safe and convenient way to carry surgical drains, helping improve comfort, mobility, and confidence while reducing the risk of accidental pulling or infection. This small but meaningful initiative aimed to enhance patients' quality of life during the early stages of healing. The bags were stitched by **Maher**, an NGO in Pune that works with destitute women and children. A post-surgery exercise sheet and a squeeze ball, to help improve hand and arm function, were included in the bag.



PROJECT HERCEPTIN/TRASTUZUMAB

An initiative that began 10 years back and continues with the help of donations. We are grateful to the Watumull Sanatorium Trust for their generous support.

The objective of starting the **Herceptin fund** is to reduce the risk of a recurrence in Her2 positive breast cancer in non-affording women by providing them the targeted therapy drug free of cost for 6 months. Trastuzumab (brand name Herceptin) is a monoclonal antibody used to treat Breast Cancer. Specifically, it is used for Breast Cancer that is HER2 receptor positive. It acts like a vaccine and is given along with chemotherapy for a minimum of 6 months, either before or after the surgery.

PROJECT PROTEIN POWDER

Protein is important for maintaining muscle mass, it helps fight off infections and aids in building tissue lost due to treatment or the cancer diagnosis. Many patients that come from lower socio-economic backgrounds fall short in their nutrition because of their dietary choices based on food habits and financial circumstances. The Protein Project will provide selected Head and Neck Cancer Patients with protein supplements, during and after radiation or surgery.

The expected impact of Project Protein would be:

- Increased Body weight
- Reduction in chemotherapy toxicity
- Enhance quality of life

This project has been funded by **Watumull Sanatorium Trust**.

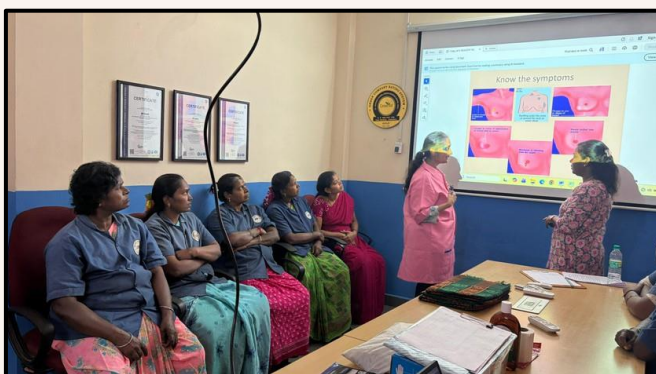
Awareness and Screening

The Nag Foundation team comprising of Rebecca Desouza, Eenakshi Ramchandani, Veena Gaikwad, Joan Fernandes and Dr Prerana Kulkarni went to Puducherry and Chennai to conduct Oral, Breast and Cervical Cancer awareness and screening camps at the K.K.Nag Private Limited manufacturing units in South India, where a total of 353 workers were screened.

The units were at MKM in Puducherry, MSP in Sriperumbudur and MTV in Tiruvallur.

The male workforce was screened for Oral Cancer and the female workers were screened for Oral, Breast and Cervical Cancer.

In addition, 3 awareness talks were given at, Hyatt Hotel, Promila Foundation and Microtherm India.



Conferences

The **11th Year in Review Breast Cancer** was held from 23rd January to 25th January 2026. Nag Foundation in association with **Women's Cancer Initiative, Tata Memorial Hospital** hosted the conference at Courtyard by Marriott, Andheri, Mumbai.



The idea of this conference was to recapitulate the best Breast Cancer science every year in a Year in Review format. The theme of the meeting was '**Breast Cancer: The Year That Was... 2025**'. The aim was to capture the best original scientific abstracts and deliberations covered in the major oncology conferences that took place in the preceding year. In this major conference, Surgical, Radiation, Medical, Pathology, Biomarkers & Imaging related abstracts made this meeting truly multidisciplinary.

The International Faculty like Prof. Dr Sibylle Loibl, Dr Matteo Lambertini, Dr Alistair Edward Ring, Dr Shaheenah Dawood, and National Faculty like Dr Sudeep Gupta, Dr Shona Nag, Dr Bhawana Sirohi, Dr Rahul Kulkarni, Dr Joy Ghose, etc. were able to present an extensive overview of various abstracts and published papers over the previous year.

Participants greatly appreciated the various presentations especially on the treatment options in Hormone Receptor Positive breast cancer, sequencing of newer drugs , breast cancer biology driven treatment modalities, etc.

"The conference was an eye-opener. Breast Cancer is vast, there is so much to learn and the conference helped me shape my thoughts about Breast Cancer."

-Dr Dilan Davis M.



The **Cochin Oncology Group** in association with Nag Foundation, held the **1st Year in Review Breast Cancer (Revisited Kerala Chapter)** in Kochi from 28th February 2026 to 1st March 2026. Dr Shona Nag attended and inaugurated the same.

Nag Foundation in association with **ACORD/MOGA** (Medical Oncology Group of Australia) held a 1-day **Concept Development Workshop** on 7th March 2026 in Pune at Panchratna Hotel. The aim of the workshop was to help and guide oncology doctors and students, turn new ideas for a cancer clinical research study into a persuasive 1-page concept outline.



Faculty included:



Dr Martin Stockler - Oncology Director, NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, Australia.
Professor of Oncology and Clinical Epidemiology, University of Sydney.
Medical Oncologist, Concord Cancer Centre and Chris O'Brien Lifehouse RPA.



Prof. Andrew Martin - Professor of Innovative Clinical Trials and leads the University of Queensland's Clinical Trials Capability (ULTRA) program.
Professor in the biostatistics group at the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre University of Sydney.



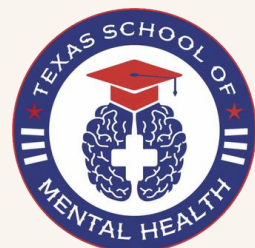
Dr Pankaj Kumar Panda - Professor, Chief Research Officer, Apollo Proton Cancer Centre.



Dr Atul Batra - MD, DM.
Additional Professor, Department of Medical Oncology, AIIMS, Delhi.

Awards

At the **3rd Edition** of the **C Positive Awards 2026**, held in June and co-hosted by the Texas School of Mental Health and the Rising India Research Foundation, Rebecca Desouza was honoured with the prestigious **Psycho-Oncology Excellence Award of Honour** in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the field of psycho-oncology and her commitment to advancing compassionate, integrated cancer care.





कृतज्ञता
(With Gratitude)



Trastuzumab/Herceptin Fund- ₹4,59,150/-

General Aid - ₹10,56,507/-

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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:

Bank Name: State Bank of India
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