

Quest to Quell Cancer Among 'Poorest of the Poor' Unites Best Minds in Oncology

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Chennai: Eradicating cancer among the 'poorest of the poor' has brought together over 100 top cancer specialists of India and the United Kingdom to explore ways to drive away the deadly disease. The occasion was the two-day Indo-UK summit on oncology which began here on Friday, as part of the Indo-British Health Initiative (IBHI) of Miot Hospital.

Inaugurating the summit, Lord Kakkar, UK delegation leader and professor of sur-

gery, University College, London, said that every two minutes someone in his country was diagnosed with cancer. "Cancer incidence rates in Great Britain have increased by more than a third since the mid-1970s," he said. "In India, I am told, there are one million new cancer cases every year." He said the statistics were a reminder of how much work remained to be done in the area of cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Describing the IBHI as a "fantastic initiative," he



Founder of Indo-British Health Initiative Dr Prithvi Mohandas with UK Deputy High Commissioner Mike Nithavrianakis | MARTIN LOUIS

urged Indian and UK health organisations to actively support it. Lord Kakkar said the oncology delegation from

UK was keen to learn from India's scale and complexity and ability to come up with low-cost, innovative solu-

tions. "They are also keen to share the UK experience, especially the challenges we face with an ageing population and the increasing incidence of cancer it brings."

The summit's three strands - technology and innovation, education and training and commercial partnership - would be of interest to everyone: government, science and research communities, pharmaceutical firms and wider civil society organisations involved in advocacy, awareness and research, he added. Addressing a press

conference later, Dr Prithvi Mohandas, founder-secretary, IBHI, said the summit would discuss the 16 most common Indian cancers, how to cure them and ways to create awareness among the population. "The aim of the summit is to eradicate cancer among the poorest of the poor and the most effective way is early diagnosis."

Dr Mohandas said a quiz competition on oncology was held for PG students in medicine to test their understanding of the various causes that lead to cancer.

INT'L MEET AT ADYAR CANCER INSTITUTE

Chennai: A two-day international conference on Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL) will be held on Saturday and Sunday at the Adyar Cancer Institute. The meet will see the participation of pioneers in areas of medical oncology and pathology. Addressing a press meet here on Friday, doctors of the institute said the overall incidence of NHL showed an increase across the country. In Chennai, the average annual increase was four per cent between 1982 and 2010. An estimated 1,350 new cases of NHL occurred in Tamil Nadu every year at the rate of two per 1,00,000 people, they said. Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma is a cancer that affects the lymphatic system due to abnormalities in blood cells. Pointing out that the cure rates of the disease had improved by 70 per cent due to improvements in diagnostic and pathological techniques, the oncologists said 30 per cent of common lymphomas still remained incurable.