

# World Cancer Day 2022 “Close the Care Gap”

Subhash C Parija

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World Cancer Day is observed every year on February 4.<sup>1</sup> It is a global endeavor initiated by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).<sup>2</sup> The day is observed every year to uphold awareness on cancer and also to enforce measures on prevention, detection, and treatment.

It is indeed disheartening to note that cancer is the second leading cause of death. In the year 2021, an estimated 20 million people were diagnosed with cancer.<sup>3</sup> Nearly 10 million had perished as per the estimate. However, we cannot forget the fact that cancers can be treated, and several of them could be prevented or cured. But then, it must be said in all fairness that half of the global population does not gain access to the comprehensive range of available clinical and nursing services, a point that would acquire great dimensions in the present scenario.<sup>4</sup> This year, the theme of World Cancer Day is “Close the Care Gap”<sup>5</sup> meaning that the diagnosis of cancer has the dreaded ability to push families into the brink of poverty, particularly in those countries that are synonymous with low income. More so, due to the prevailing pandemic, the effect has been further exacerbated.<sup>6</sup>

## THE GAP IS UBIQUITOUS

A discerning observer would realize the fact that the gap is widening and universal. Let us not forget the fact that the gap would affect the other person, and many a time, the gap would directly affect an individual who will be close to the observer. Having said that one needs to take cognizance of the fact that the equity gap largely affects those hailing from the low- and middle-income countries. Hence, our immediate endeavor should be necessarily aimed at addressing the issue. Furthermore, the most vulnerable groups are more prone to an enhanced risk that is mainly attributed to factors such as tobacco, environmental pollutants, and malnutrition.<sup>7</sup>

## WHERE THERE IS A WILL, THERE IS A WAY

All of us should make a sincere attempt to narrow the gap of equity and that needs to be done to the best of our abilities. Several factors determine or influence this endeavor and particular mention needs to be made of the geographical location, socioeconomic status, and access to health care.<sup>8</sup> Other factors such as culture and beliefs, diet, and nutrition, etc., also do count. Cancer disparities are looming large. These have to be suitably addressed. The fact remains that the actual reality centers on the fact as to who you are and where you thrive. In the long run, this could indeed make the cardinal difference. Also, the difference between life and death is hair splitting, and hence, we need to be quite sensitive to this element. Despite all the odds, we can effect changes, provided we have a will to do. We need to comprehend the fact that so as to reduce inequity,

Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Puducherry, India

**Corresponding Author:** Subhash C Parija, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Puducherry, India, Phone: +91 4132616766, e-mail: vc@sbvu.ac.in

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the following principles need to be strictly adhered to, in order that our endeavors fructify eventually:<sup>9</sup> (a) educating the public about the plethora of available strategies in cancer prevention; (b) equipping adequately the discerning health care professionals with the much needed and requisite skills, besides adequate knowledge as to how inequity influences cancer care and we need to possess the methods to mitigate the same; (c) fortifying emphatically the services associated with primary health care on a war footing so that it is promptly delivered to the communities in need.

## WORLD CANCER DAY AND ONCOLOGY NURSES

Nursing professionals, in general, and Oncology Nurses, in particular, need special mention and praise on the occasion of World Cancer Day.<sup>10</sup> These selfless professionals closely monitor the condition, administer therapy based on the judicious advice of the medical professionals, and most significantly provide solace and support to the near and dear ones of the patient. These professionals endear themselves willingly and instantaneously to variegated health care settings with the solitary objective of serving the sick and weary, but are under great stress.<sup>11</sup> The Oncology Nurses in particular need to exhibit robust and resolute behavior as they would be carrying out the duties in the immediate presence of cancer patients battling for life. Oncology nurses must have conviction and fortitude as the watchwords that would enable them to continue with their noble mission. The Nursing professionals through their diligence and commitment would go a long way in closing the care gap and hence epitomize World Cancer Day 2022 “Close the Care Gap”.<sup>12</sup>

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