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Press Release
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India needs to scale-up clinical research to address the growing cancer burden

The Indian Society for Clinical Research believes this World Cancer Day serves as a timely reminder for the urgent need to conduct fresh clinical trials in India for newer and more effective cancer therapies

New Delhi, February 3, 2016: The past decades have witnessed hundreds and thousands of lives lost to cancer, and present day statistics only confirm the disease's top spot in the list of life-threatening illnesses. Today, cancer is the second biggest killer after heart disease in India. Data from the WHO World Cancer Report released in 2015 indicates that in India, there are 7 lakh new cancer cases per year, killing over 3.5 lakh people every year. Experts fear that this count is only expected to rise in the next 10-15 years, which makes it crucial to focus on new and more effective cancer treatments – in addition to the focus on prevention and diagnostics – and bolster the momentum of clinical research in our country. The demographic distribution of different kinds of cancers in our country also makes it important to invest in local clinical research so that we can find more effective solutions for cancers that affect our population.

Every year, the world observes World Cancer Day on February 4th. The theme for this year is **“We can. I can.”**, emphasising the need for collaborative action to fight cancer. In line with this theme, *The Indian Society for Clinical Research (ISCR)* firmly believes that encouraging more clinical research in cancer can increase patient access to more effective and affordable treatment in India.

“For cancer patients, time is of essence. I have personally experienced challenges in trying to access a clinical trial for my wife, which was the only treatment option available for her,” said **Vivek Tomar, husband of a patient suffering from lung cancer.** *“For many cancer patients, participation in a clinical trial is a matter of life and death. Patients cannot wait and it is important for us to remember this. We need an environment that encourages and fosters clinical research so that patients like my wife can benefit.”*

Ms. Suneela Thatte, President, ISCR opines, *“ISCR welcomes every development that helps in conducting clinical research in India and is fully committed to the country’s quest for newer cancer treatments. I believe the recent regulatory amendments in India have led to a more conducive environment for clinical trials in the country –this when combined with our vast pool of scientific talent and resources– presents a wonderful window of opportunity for us to strengthen clinical research in the country, so that every patient can have access to the latest cancer therapies.”*

Commenting on the need to further increase the scale of clinical research in India in line with our capabilities and needs, **Dr. C.S. Pramesh, Professor and Chief, Thoracic Surgery, Department of Surgical Oncology at Tata Memorial Hospital** said, *“When we look at medical research over the last decade or so, I think we have made some major advances. But when you look at the conversion of these major medical advances into what has actually reached the patients, we have not fared too well. We need to focus our research and resources on finding treatments for the more prevalent cancers in India- head and neck, breast, cervical and gall bladder. As a country, we have a moral obligation to participate in clinical research and a responsibility to our patients. Institutions such as ours have made a lot of investments in clinical research to address the unique needs of our patient population. Clinical research by the country and for the country is the way forward.”*

About ISCR

The Indian Society for Clinical Research (ISCR) is an association of clinical research professionals that aims to build awareness of clinical research as a specialty in India and to facilitate its growth in the country while helping to evolve the highest standards of quality and ethics. To that extent, we are fully supportive of the initiatives undertaken by regulatory authorities to create a more robust and regulated environment in India for the conduct of clinical research and will continue to work very closely with different stakeholders in the development of regulations that will safeguard and protect patients in a clinical trial. For more information, visit www.iscr.org

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