

Message



Dr Sanjiv Chopra

Chief Executive
Tata Trusts Cancer
Initiative

Dear Readers,

As you all know that the country is gripped in COVID 19 pandemic and fighting a crisis, we stand in solidarity with all frontline workers and our fellow Indians.

During these challenging times, our teams at all the construction sites are working relentlessly as we march closer towards our goal of providing optimal quality cancer care for the people of Assam. Our healthcare workers at the facilities are doing a commendable job by providing support through all possible channels of communications. We have ensured that the teams follow requisite protocols and stay safe. Provisions have been made for regular check-up and all medical support has been arranged. We are rigorously following all protocols and directives issued by the government including work from home culture. Although this comes with challenges, however, our backend teams are always available through calls and messages for all kinds of support.

There is also a ray of hope through the challenging times!

With immense pleasure, we would like

to share our achievements of the recent phase. In January this year, we have successfully launched the Radiation Therapy Unit equipped with LINAC at Onco Care Centre – AMCH, Dibrugarh. So far, the team has completed 1150 consultations and 80 radiation therapies.

At Silchar Medical College and Hospital, we have launched Swasth Assam Kiosk – a wellness centre aimed at opportunistic screening of common non-communicable diseases and breast, cervical and oral cancers.

We look forward to bringing in many more services in the near future. Our hospitals are at the anvil of completion and we hope to commission operations soon.

We encourage each one of you to adhere strictly to COVID-19 protocols, get vaccinated on priority and stay safe. We are optimistic and will emerge much stronger from this present crisis. We continue to keep our utmost focus towards the noble cause of providing easily accessible and affordable cancer care for the people of Assam.

শুভেচ্ছা জনালোঁ
Best wishes!

What's Inside



Infrastructure

The First Linear Accelerator of ACCF – An Insight



First patient on the new LINAC

The Radiation Block at Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) was constructed by AMCH authority under the supervision of PWD. Later, ACCF had undertaken the task of renovation of the block and installation of Linear Accelerator (LINAC) – converting the existing building into an advanced facility. Although the project was delayed due to the pandemic, our team sweated through all odds and completed the RT Block in September 2020.

The facility is set up with high-end machines – a Linear Accelerator Dosimetry and a CT Simulator – in collaboration with IndusInd Bank Limited.

Linear Accelerator or LINAC comes with multiple photon and electron energy. It has five different photon energies and five different electron energies which is advantageous to treat different types of tumours - from superficial to deep-seated.

After the testing phase was over, the commissioning process begun in December 2020 and Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) approval was received on February 02, 2021. Led by Dr Phulkumari Talukdar –

Senior Radiation Oncologist, Bidisha Dutta – Radiation Safety Officer and a team of nurses, the facility kickstarted on February 16, 2021.

Social Impact of the Radiation Therapy Block

Accessible and Affordable Treatment - The facility is a boon to the region and will serve innumerable patients who otherwise had to travel long distances and it will also reduce out of pocket expenses.

Reduced Waiting Time – The facility has significantly reduced patients' waiting time for treatment, as patients from other institutions are being referred to Dibrugarh for radiation therapy.

Treatment for All – The facility is beneficial to all categories of people.

Advantageous to Students – The facility will benefit the students at the medical college in their practical studies.

Promotion of Academics and Research – The facility will enable research in the field of oncology at AMCH.



Anil Tanti
Project Lead

Focus

Treading Through An Ordeal With Ease And Comfort

"I am glad that I visited the Dibrugarh Onco Care Centre. My family is very happy with the treatment and today I am feeling much better."

Meena Dey, a 50-year-old female hailing from Tinsukia district of Assam was diagnosed with lung cancer at a Guwahati hospital. Meena's family exhausted their finances in the initial process of evaluation and had to return to their hometown after spending about a month in Guwahati. Her health began to deteriorate for lack of treatment. During this period, her family learnt about Onco Care Dibrugarh, which was also near to her home – about 50 kilometres with a travel time of approximately an hour. When she visited the centre she had persistent cough, sleepless nights, neither able to walk without support nor able to sit for prolonged period. Upon examination, she was detected with pleural effusion or excessive buildup of fluid in the space between lungs and chest cavity. In three sittings the fluid was removed while her tissue block was collected from a private lab in Guwahati and sent to Oncopath lab, Mumbai for high-end investigations facilitated by ACCF.

Her chemotherapy cycles had begun, which was free of cost through Atal Amrit Abhiyan Scheme facilitated by the State Government. Since Meena was very weak to travel back home after administering chemo, she was provided with free stay in ACCF-managed guest house for a few days after each chemo cycle. Soon Meena's cough had improved, has sound sleep and able to discharge her daily chores with ease. Both Meena and her husband are happy with the services of ACCF. Moreover, since the centre is near to their home – it has reduced the out of pocket expenses and travel time to Guwahati. Meena is glad that she can now take care of her children, home, and herself without much difficulty. ACCF's Medical team at Dibrugarh has ensured to deliver at its best and patients' satisfaction is a motivation for continuing the good works and contributing towards the noble cause of boosting cancer care in the region.



Meena undergoing treatment in Onco Care, Dibrugarh



Dr Uma Shankar Kutum
Medical Oncologist

Holistic Approach Towards Cancer Care – A Case Study

Name: Raju
Gender: Male
Occupation: Daily wage worker
Addiction: Chewing of betel nut and tobacco for 10-15 years

Admitting diagnosis: Oral cancer
Age: 30 years
Address: Sipajhar, Darrang
Marital status: Married

Location Background

Darrang District is one of the aspirational districts of Assam. The district has challenged health indicators and rising burden of Non-communicable Disease (NCD) and cancer. A large part of the demography in the district is dependent on agriculture and daily wagers. There is a lack of well-developed and advanced healthcare system including cancer control system; inadequate supply of trained human resources in oncology; late detection and delayed diagnosis and treatment; high incidence of preventable cancers due to tobacco consumption are the core healthcare issues of the district. The cancer incidence is almost 100 to 125 persons per one lakh population and the number is increasing arithmetically.

ACCF's Approach

Keeping the above issues in view, ACCF has started a three-dimensional approach in cancer prevention and control in the district. ACCF has initiated mass awareness at all the rural places using different tools and techniques for easy understanding by the community. Health education, knowledge about different cancer symptoms and risk factors are the core content of the mass awareness. ACCF also has a trained designated team for screening and early detection of cancer that comprise of District Health Manager, Health Camp Manager, Dentist, Nurses, and a data entry operator. It is a mobile team that screens beneficiaries in different health and wellness centres in remote parts of the District. In Block PHCs the team organises opportunistic screening and simultaneously engage in strengthening cancer screening skills of healthcare providers.

During screening, the team has come across beneficiaries with different conditions and have advised and facilitated diagnosis and evaluation in higher centres. One of the beneficiaries is Raju, whose story is highlighted below.

Raju's Detection and Diagnosis

Raju has been suffering from tooth ache for one year with continuous weight loss. At the onset of symptoms, he visited local health care providers, but there was not much improvement of his ailing condition. Next, he visited one of the ACCF centres and was examined by the Outreach Team. Initially he was examined by the concerned dentist of Darrang (ACCF) and after his dental examination, it was found that the patient has a history of chewing tobacco and betel nut for past 10-15 years and had a non-healing ulcer inside the lower lip. The dentist suspected oral cancer and immediately referred to State Cancer Institute (SCI), Guwahati for further diagnosis. ACCF arranged an ambulance and after reaching Guwahati, he was navigated to Head and Neck oncology OPD on September 12, 2020 by team ACCF posted at SCI Guwahati. After examining in the OPD, the physician suggested for FNAC and CT scan of neck and thorax and advised revisit with reports.

ACCF has appointed Patient Navigators (PN) in every hospital for ease of patients to take different services at Medical Colleges. The PN at Guwahati Medical College helped the patient and navigated accordingly. The physician after reviewing the reports said he has cancer - suggestive of moderately

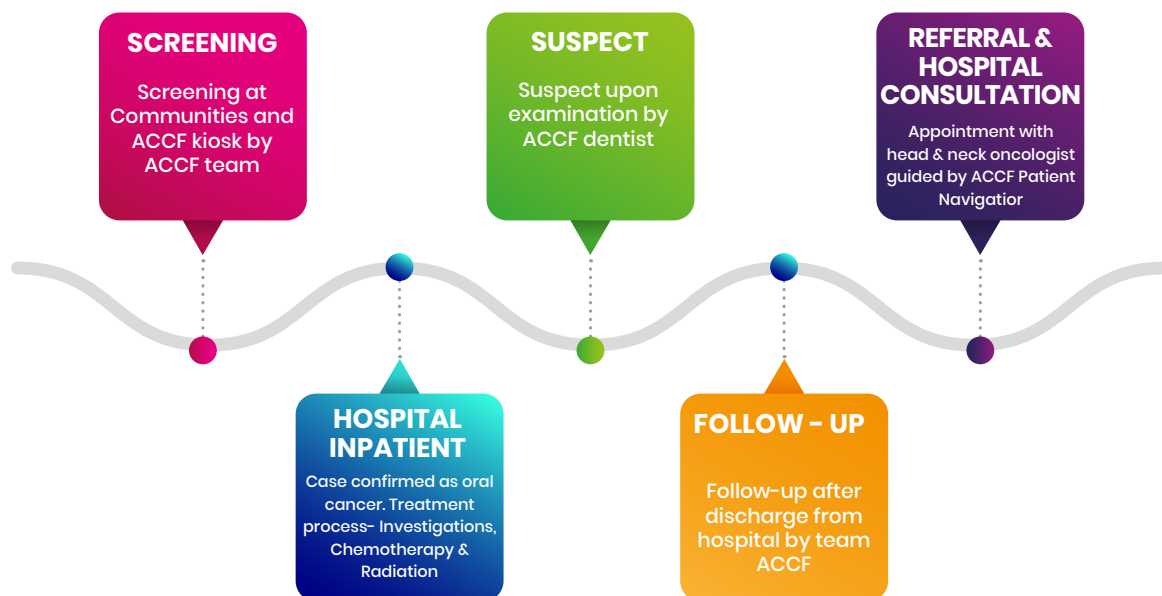
differentiated squamous cell carcinoma with metastasis to the right sided cervical lymph node. The team of oncologists at SCI, after examining suggested for some confirmatory tests and the PN explained to him and his family members the need of investigation and treatment required. The PN further explained the different schemes and the requisite documents for free diagnostic tests and treatment. The patient was assisted to avail services under Atal Amrit Abhiyan, which covered his treatment expenses.

The patient - after dental review and tooth extraction - started with the cycles of chemo and radiation therapy on November 18, 2020. However, after the first cycle, Raju had many side effects like weight loss, fever, mouth sores, loss of appetite etc. To overcome this phase, he along with his family members were given motivational counselling by

the palliative care team of ACCF and advised to continue the treatment and also informed that it will take some time before energy returns to normal. After completion of the entire cycles, Raju gradually recovered from his ailing condition. The oncologist informed that Raju is recovering well and needs to visit hospital every month for oral check-up. He was also advised to maintain a healthy and balanced diet. Raju was discharged from SCI on February 11, 2021 in a healthy state and since then ACCF's Health Camp Manager of Darrang has been regularly following up with him to understand his recovery status.

ACCF is always committed to its goal of providing compressive cancer care to every patient we come across. The happiness of Raju's family to see him recovering, gaining weight, and happily spending a good social life makes us motivated.

Continuum of Care



Dr Sahidul Islam
Dentist, Darrang

Events

World Cancer Day - 2021

On the occasion of World Cancer Day 2021, ACCF had organized a month-long cancer awareness programme at various districts of Assam. Aligned with the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)'s theme this year - "I Am and I Will", ACCF aimed to create awareness that it is possible to win against cancer. Speaking on the occasion, Gautam Chintey – Project Director, ACCF said – "We are here for a noble cause. The Government of Assam

and Tata Trusts have initiated to boost the cancer care scenario in the state. Creating awareness is integral to the cancer care programme and we have our teams working in communities for educating and screening people. Meanwhile, construction is in full swing for our upcoming facilities at Dibrugarh, Barpeta, Tezpur, Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Kokrajhar, Darang, Diphu, Silchar and Guwahati."

The event was supported by IndusInd Bank Limited and Pfizer Inc.

Glimpses



World Cancer Day programme inaugurated at Dibrugarh



An interactive session at the event at SCI-Guwahati



Disseminating cancer awareness message through folk media



Sensitization and interactive session with healthcare workers at FAAMCH, Barpeta



An interactive session at the event at SCI-Guwahati



An inspirational session with cancer survivors in Kamrup Rural



We walk to drive away cancer



Health check-up at Swasth Assam Kiosk, Tezpur



Influencing the young minds



Awareness programme on prevention and early detection of cancer at Darrang



Mass sensitization drive at Diphu



Cancer awareness procession by healthcare workers at Barpeta



CME

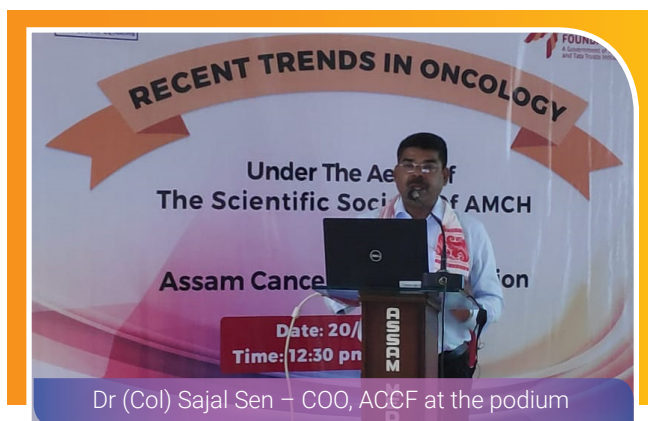
Seminar on Recent Trends in Oncology

Under the aegis of The Scientific Society of AMCH, ACCF organized the first CME on 'Recent Trends in Oncology' in March 2021, at Assam Medical College and Hospital. Dr Sanjeeb Kakati – Principal, AMCH inaugurated the event and addressed the participants. He expressed his happiness for the collaboration with ACCF and applauded the good works through the Day Care Centre, Palliative Care Unit and the kiosk. He said, "AMCH had the first deep Xray therapy machine to treat cancer patients in Assam, and having the linear accelerator has given the institute a big boost and it

will be beneficial for the cancer patients and students as well." Speakers at the event were Dr (Col) Dipak Kumar Mishra – Director – Pathology, TMC, Kolkata; Dr (Col) Sajal Sen – Chief Operating Officer, ACCF; Dr Sajid Ahmed, Associate Professor - Dept. of Surgery, AMCH; Dr Phulkumari Talukdar – Radiation Oncologist, ACCF. Constructive responses were received from medical professionals of various institutions who had participated in the event. Dr Sen, highlighting the importance of the event said – "we anticipate organizing many more CMEs in the months to come."



Dr Sanjeeb Kakati – Principal, AMCH at the podium



Dr (Col) Sajal Sen – COO, ACCF at the podium



Guest and Participants at the CME



Distribution of souvenir to the speakers

Frontline

Our Clinician team in service of the communities



Dr Phulkumari Talukdar
Radiation Oncologist
Dibrugarh



Dr Uma Shankar Kutum
Medical Oncologist
Dibrugarh



Dr Tanma Mahanta
Palliative Care
Dibrugarh



Dr Gautam Baruah
Medical Officer, Oncology
Dibrugarh



Dr Kailash Mishra
Clinical Oncologist
Diphu



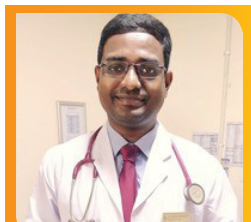
Dr Snigdha Dutta
Medical Officer, Oncology
Diphu



Dr Pranjal Protim Gogoi
Palliative Care
Jorhat



Dr Sanjeev Gupta
Radiation Oncologist
Tezpur



Dr Venkat Pradeep
Medical Oncologist
Tezpur



Dr Thamizholi S
Radiation Oncologist
Barpeta



Dr Dipankar Dakua
Palliative Care
Guwahati



Dr Dulal Kiran Mondal
Clinical and Radiation Oncologist
Jorhat



Dr Sajin T.S.
Medical Officer, Oncology
Barpeta



Dr Satya Narayan Sharma
Medical Superintendent
Barpeta



Dr Swrangsri Mashahary
Medical Officer, Oncology
Tezpur

Soulful

Bravo Medical Science

That miracles happen through medical science is where my belief rests today!

Have you heard about the phrase ‘a stitch in time saves nine’? So is - early detection of cancer can save life.

On a summer evening I was attending a wedding party when a dapper looking man, also wearing a cap walked up to me and gently asked “are you Upasana?” He wore a familiar smile and as I replied to him, I tried recalling his face. Next, he asked if I could recognize him, while my mind travelled as far as it can to recall the calm and friendly face – to answer in positive and the warm reply he was expecting as he gazed into my eyes. After a few seconds all I said was “sorry, please don’t mind.” He said, “I am Mrigank, we studied together in school.” Of course, the joyous man of the class. Flashback of fond memories swept my mind. I gave him a bear hug - after all, we are meeting after years.



Mrigank was unrecognizable – looked frail and his hair gone too. I apologized for not recognizing him while wondering what might have happened to his hair. He said many people fail to identify him for his bald looks now. I could not hold back my curiosity and asked the reason behind this. “I lost my hair recently as am

undergoing chemotherapy” he said. This was the last thought in my mind... I was stunned! Mrigank shared his woes – “yes, the disease caught me too. This is why I feel weak.” Just then a little girl came running towards Mrigank and behind her was a smiling lady. He introduced them to me, “This is my small family.” Though I forced a smile and exchanged greetings with them, a thousand thoughts crossed my mind including the agonizing cries of my beloved neighbour – Medhi Auntie, slipping through our window. She was suffering from brain cancer and her last few days were extremely painful. Those thoughts haunted me for the next several days after the party. A few months passed when I met Mrigank once again in a marketplace. This time his head was covered with thick hair instead of the cap and looked stronger. Curiosity was at play again and I whispered to know about his cap rather. He had a hearty laugh and triumphantly announced – “I am now fully cured.” Mrigank’s cancer was detected early and received timely treatment, which helped him defeat the disease. I was touched by this news and nothing seemed bigger than his contentment. Mrigank’s case is one amongst several healing stories that was possible due to early detection.

Miracle or medical science? Working closely with the health industry, I have learnt and strongly advocate for routine screening of cancers. Remember, early diagnosis and timely treatment can help cure many cancers.

All I have to say is– Bravo Medical Science!



Upasana Patowary
COO Office

Collaborations



Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited has come forward to join hands with ACCF towards developing affordable cancer care for the population of Darrang District. The contributions will be utilised for setting up of LINAC in Mangaldoi and also for strengthening cancer awareness activities.

As a part of their CSR activities, Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) has collaborated with ACCF for boosting the healthcare scenario at Barpeta. The contributions has been utilised to equip the upcoming radiotherapy block in the cancer care facility at Barpeta.



Pfizer Inc. has contributed towards strengthening community healthcare system. The contributions are being utilised in various activities for creating cancer awareness in communities and at ACCF's wellness kiosk – Swasth Assam at Diphu and Silchar.

IndusInd Bank Limited has collaborated with ACCF and their contributions have been utilised to equip the Radiation Therapy Centre of ACCF at AMCH, Dibrugarh with LINAC and Dosimetry.

IndusInd Bank

Touching Lives

Digital Nerve System (DiNC) - At your service

Our healthcare workers have been persistently serving at different levels of the system even during the pandemic. Whether attending to patients at the facilities or through video or telephonic calls, they have ensured to cater to the needs of all.

ACCF's robust healthcare networking service – DiNC, located at State Cancer Institute (SCI) at Guwahati, is a unique tele facility. Patients and caregivers can avail the services from the comfort of their homes for any advice by doctors, for appointments at the centre and much more. Patients, caregivers, and beneficiaries have often come back to appreciate the endeavours demonstrated during interaction by patientcare coordinators, DiNC coordinators, nurses, and doctors.

One such interaction has been chronicled by Ritu Kumari – Patient Coordinator, ACCF.

"Like any other call, my first interaction with Ms Anjana (name changed) from Jorhat begun with her seeking an appointment with oncologist. After the usual practice of guiding her about the process of treatment, she elaborated on her health condition. I understood she was heartbroken with the news of her being diagnosed with cancer and wanted to share her ordeal. While trying to comfort her, I ensured that she will be treated under best doctors and it will not be long when she will rebound.

"On her appointment day she visited me after her consultation with the doctor and expressed her gratitude for the interaction we had had, which put her



woes at ease. Soon her treatment began and often we spoke related to her various medical support. With time, Ms Anjana began to heal and her frequency of visits to the centre also lessened. Whenever she called DiNC, she would express her wish to talk to me. It was sheer satisfaction that we could provide quality service and treatment to her.

"Once, after several months Ms Anjana visited SCI and also visited DiNC to meet me. Her health had improved, and she looked stronger than before. She informed that she was on the path of recovery. I was happy to learn about her good health. Not just this. She also surprised me by gifting her autobiography, which she had started writing during her course of treatment and was grateful for all that we have done for her.

"It was a moment of pure joy! I was elated with her gesture. This has motivated all of us at DiNC to continue with our service with much zeal and vigour."



Ritu Kumari
Patient Coordinator
DiNC

Snippets



Shri Srinath Narasimhan - CEO, Tata Trusts and Additional Director, Assam Cancer Care Foundation with team ACCF during his visit at Guwahati

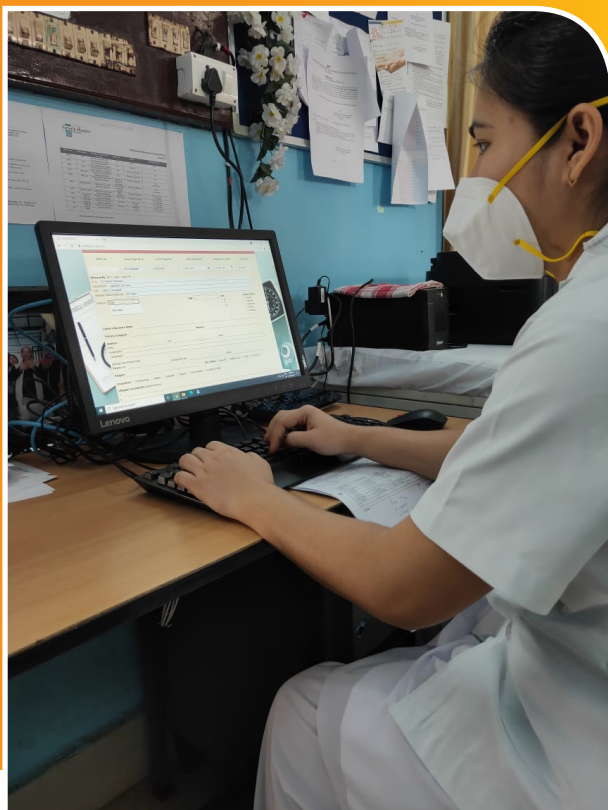
Milestone



ACCF's sixth centre of Swasth Assam wellness kiosk was inaugurated at Silchar Medical College and Hospital on April 8, 2021 by Dr Babul Bezbaruah – Principal cum Superintendent, SMCH and attended by Dr Abhijit Swami – Superintendent - SMCH; Dr Bhaskar Gupta – Vice Principal of SMCH, Dr Sajal Sen – Chief Operating Officer, ACCF and host of dignitaries from SMCH and ACCF.



ACCF's in-house IT team has successfully launched applications for Day Care Centres, Palliative Care Units and Kiosks. The applications capture data of patients and other details pertaining to treatment, which makes follow-up process seamless.



Stay connected



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For Cancer related query call toll free number **18003454325**