

Dear Friends,

Greetings from India!

Wishing you all a very Happy Dussehra and Diwali and hope that the coming years will bring in new light, health, peace, and prosperity to one and all.

We have come a long way as far as focus on maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality is concerned. We have also talked a lot about the gaps in healthcare provision. Likewise, we know that malignancies are on the rise all across the nation, and our screening programs have not been able to contain this trend for many of these. On the other hand, we have also seen that incidence of hysterectomies is also on the rise. A lot of hue and cry is raised by one and all on unnecessary surgeries being performed and most of the time we, the healthcare providers are at the receiving end for the same. The problem is much deeper than we think or understand. It is not about the mindset of healthcare providers; it is also about the mindset of public seeking a one-time solution to all their problems, and it is also about lack of universal healthcare provision guidelines and protocols by our systems. To add to this, lack of education, awareness, and understanding of the pros and cons of such decisions and long-term consequences needs a very robust program to be implemented. This battle is very long-drawn. It needs a very systematic multipronged approach for awareness and care provision including country-based screening protocols and proper guidelines for all surgical procedures.

Ever since, India launched its cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination program, there has been a curb on the incidence of cervical cancer. However, breast cancer is now on top, still preventable by application of the breast screening program, but what is worrisome are the trends of lung, esophagus, mouth, stomach, liver, and ovarian malignancies.

Apart from focusing only on the screening, we must understand that there are many contributors to these rising trends of malignancies, of which rapid urbanization, aging population, obesity, inactive and unhealthy lifestyles and a whole lot of environmental factors. So, if we think that only screening and early diagnosis will take care of these trends, we are wrong. This needs commitment with determination from all of us to improvise not only our screening and preventive health programs but also work on the contributors per se like population overload, environmental deterioration, and unhealthy lifestyle, then only we will be able to safeguard ourselves and our future generations.

I hope, I have given everyone some food for thought to work on.

"Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us" —*Samuel Smiles*



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