

Economic Loss Due to Oral Cancer in India

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Why in the News?

- A new study by Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), a premier cancer treatment and research institute, has estimated that the productivity loss of the country due to oral cancer in year 2022 was approximately \$5.6 Billion.

Background

- According to the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), India's cancer scenario is burdened with oral cavity cancer being the most common among men.

- India accounts for almost a third of the global incidence and mortality related to oral cancer.
- Despite strides in oral cancer diagnosis and treatment, escalating healthcare costs strain both providers and patients financially.
- Moreover, these cancers are becoming increasingly common among the younger age groups, in contrast to the western world.
- This can put a significant strain on the productivity of the economy.
- To tackle these issues, Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi, Director, ACTREC, led research to **quantify the economic loss resulting from premature mortality related to oral cancer in India.**

Key Findings of the Study

- **Years lost**
 - The study said that the **671 years were lost to early (29.8per cent) and advanced cancers (70.2per cent).**
 - Considering the retirement age in India being 62 years, 91 per cent of the deaths or incurable recurrence of cancers were in the premature age groups. The median age is of 41.5 years.
- **Middle class affected**
 - Both early (70 per cent) and advanced (86 per cent) stage cancers were from a middle-class socioeconomic status.
 - 53 per cent requiring some form of insurance schemes or financial support in order to complete treatment.
- **Productivity lost**

Productivity lost due to premature mortality among females and males was ₹57,22,803 rupees and ₹71,83,917 rupees, respectively per death.

- The amount of money that society lost because of early-stage oral cancer was around ₹31,29,092 rupees for each person affected.
- For advanced-stage cancer, it was about 71,72,566 rupees per person.
- Looking at how many people died from oral cancer in the country, the total cost of lost productivity in India in 2022 was about \$5.6 billion.
- This is **about 0.18 percent of all the money the country made that year.**

Significance of the Study

- Oral cancer is caused due to tobacco consumption including smokeless tobacco, betel-quid chewing, excessive alcohol consumption, unhygienic oral condition, and sustained viral infections that include papillomavirus.
- In India, oral cavity cancer has emerged as the most prevalent cancer among men with the country contributing to almost a third of the global incidence and mortality.
- Doctors say that **this study re-emphasizes the need for early screening for the younger age group.**

Measures Taken by Govt. of India to Address Rising Cases of Cancer

Year	2020	2021	2022
Mortality of Cancer Cases	7.7 lakh	7.89 lakh	8.08 lakh

- The above table highlights the estimated number of mortalities of cancer cases State/UTs wise during 2020 to 2022.
- **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD)**
- Government of India provides technical and financial support to the States/UTs under the **NP-NCD. Cancer is an integral part of NP-NCD.**

The programme focusses on the following aspects:

- strengthening infrastructure,
- human resource development,
- health promotion & awareness generation for Cancer prevention,
- early diagnosis,
- management and referral to an appropriate level of healthcare facility for treatment of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), including cancer.
- **Population-based initiative**
 - A population-based initiative for prevention, control and screening for common NCDs i.e., diabetes, hypertension and common cancers has been rolled out in the country under NHM and also as a part of Comprehensive Primary Health Care.
 - Under the initiative, **persons more than 30 years of age are targeted for their screening for the three common cancers i.e., oral, breast and cervical.**
 - Screening of these common cancers is **an integral part of service delivery under Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres.**
 - Under **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)**, health insurance cover of ₹5 lakhs per family per year for secondary or tertiary care hospitalization to over 60 Crores beneficiaries is provided.
- **Financial assistance**
 - Financial assistance is provided to poor patients belonging to families living below poverty line, suffering from major life-threatening diseases including cancer.
 - These assistances are provided under Umbrella scheme of **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN) and Health Minister's Discretionary Grant (HMDG).**
 - Financial assistance up to a maximum of ₹1.25 lakh is provided under HMDG to defray a part of the treatment cost and the maximum financial assistance provided under the Umbrella Scheme of RAN is ₹15 lakhs.
- **Availability of drugs**
 - **Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) Pharmacy stores** have been set up in some hospitals/institutions.
 - These have been set up with an objective to make available Cancer drugs at a substantial discount vis-à-vis the Maximum Retail Price.

Q1. What do you mean by Non-communicable diseases?

Non-communicable diseases are diseases that are not spread through infection or through other people, but are typically caused by unhealthy behaviours. They are the leading cause of death worldwide and present a huge threat to health and development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Q2. Why is Cancer difficult to cure?

Normal cells have 'safety' mechanisms in place that stop them from growing or dividing too much, and every day our immune system kills off cells that could have become a problem. Cancer cells have lost these mechanisms and can hide from the immune system, so they survive and continue to grow out of control.

Source: Oral cancer is ravaging India's workforce, costing \$5.6 billion in economic loss, says Tata Memorial study | Expresshealthcare

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/economic-loss-due-to-oral-cancer-in-india/>

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