

# The role of Psycho-oncology in Pleasant Treatment Journey (PTJ)

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Breast Cancer Patients Benefit Foundation



GENETICS

PSYCHOLOGY



## CANTALK

Advanced Instructional Course in  
**Genetics & Psychology**  
for Optimum Outcomes



# The role of Psycho-oncology in Pleasant Treatment Journey (PTJ)

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India, with a population of over a billion people, is a country of varying social, cultural and geographic characteristics.

The pattern of cancer depends on urbanization, industrialization, life style changes, population growth, habits and increase in life span

There has been a continuous increase in incidences of cancer

Today nearly two people are diagnosed every minute with cancer

On average, 70% of cancer patients are diagnosed at a very late stage of illness, when treatment is no longer effective

The only possible intervention is palliative care, including pain relief. Even this intervention fails to reach terminally ill cancer patients

This is due to a lack of capacity for prevention, public education, screening and early detection, diagnosis and treatment, whether involving surgery, radiotherapy, or chemotherapy

India has 29 fully equipped Cancer Centres to treat a population of 1 billion people

Impact of cancer in India –

**Diagnosis causes immense emotional trauma – more than 1/3 suffer from anxiety and depression**

**Associated with a lot of fear & despair**

**Treatment a major economic burden**

**Distressing for family - affects family's daily functioning, economic situation, loss of income and increase of expenses**

Psycho-oncology is a small specialty and hardly accessible

Premier cancer centres across the world have integrated psycho-social oncology into mainstream cancer care, the field, unfortunately, is still in its infancy in India

Recently courses in psycho oncology have emerged in Bangalore and Chennai. North India seems to lack a comprehensive psycho social care facilities.

Burden of psycho social and emotional support is largely dependent on NGOs and those who have endured the disease and want to help others



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Depression and anxiety are common psychological symptoms in cancer patients. It accounts for

- Reduced quality of life
- Altered decision making
- Increase in mortality

Distress is an unpleasant experience of emotional, cognitive, behavioral & spiritual nature that interferes with the ability to cope effectively with cancer

Psychological support helps to overcome

- Feelings of Distress
- Feelings of Anxiety and Depression
- Helps cope with feelings
- Aids communication between patient, caregiver and family
- Helps children and parents to come to terms
- Help in bereavement and grief
- Helps in regaining LOSS OF CONTROL

The goal of BCPBF is to expand training opportunities in psycho-oncology for physicians, psychologists, nurses, and social workers and non governmental organizations in the oncology setting

- Aims to provide
- Standard and quality psycho-social care
- Integrate psycho-social services as part of the cancer care



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At BCPBF we have attempted to make this a pleasant treatment journey (PTJ)

Medical, social, psychological, economic, spiritual factors impact outcomes in cancer treatment, particularly Quality of Life

Most of the studies look at long term psychological disabilities in cancer but the 6mths to 1yr time period between time of diagnosis and conclusion of treatment is a tumultuous journey which the patient and relatives embark on together with the doctors and other members of treating team who act as veritable tour guides

Complex relationships for shorter or longer time periods develop between the two groups of stakeholders.

A initiative by the BCPBF '**CAN TALK**' – conducts short term certificate course in Psycho-Oncology designed for nurses, doctors, psychologists, social workers, genetic counsellors, physicians and other appropriate practitioners who are interested in the area of psychosocial oncology

The purpose is to provide students with a sound understanding of the range of psychosocial issues that occur in oncology and equip them with enhanced counseling skills which can be applied to the management of patients in the palliative care setting

Emphasis is on evidence based learning by

1. Identification of symptoms by administering the Distress Thermometer and HADS at initial contact
2. Meeting with a psychologist/ trained person at the time of diagnosis
3. Clear, honest and sensitive communication
4. Care should be patient oriented
  - WHAT to expect - to reduce uncertainty
    - Procedere explained
    - Treatments offered
    - Side effects of treatment
    - Surgical procedures chemoports, prostheses, colostomies
    - Management of stomas,
5. Dealing with Psycho sexual issues
6. Management of psychological issues
  - Fears, depression, phobias
  - Dealing with anger, "Why me"
  - End of life issues
  - Grief and bereavement
  - Death, dying and beyond
7. Training in appropriate psychological interventions
  - Cognitive behavior therapy**
  - Visual imagery**
  - relaxation techniques**
  - Mindfulness**
  - Thought management**
  - search for spirituality**
  - Group therapy**
  - emotional control**
  - Regain LOSS Of CONTROL**





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## **CANTALK** Courses are designed to

Equip psychology professionals to carry out psychological evaluations

Enhance the quality of life through psycho-social interventions.

Create a large pool of professional psycho-oncologists to meet the psycho-social needs

Sensitize the oncology professionals to the psycho-social needs

Close the wide gap between current scientific knowledge and actual clinical care

Build the scientific knowledge in the field of psycho-oncology based on the Indian population by undertaking vigorous researches

Defining minimum standards for training across institutions and even nations will not only improve patient care but will also contribute to defining psycho-oncology as a discipline

According to the guidelines issued by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies

"Attending to psychosocial needs should be an integral part of quality cancer care... It is not possible to deliver good-quality cancer care without addressing patient's psychosocial health needs."

According to Dr Sameer Kaul, President BCPBF and Surgical Oncologist

"Appropriate psychological interference prevents negative impact on treatment decisions, mental state of patients, compliance of treatment, mood and stress levels of the treating team. It goes without saying that our aim should be to achieve PTJ"



### **BREAST CANCER PATIENTS BENEFIT FOUNDATION**

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