

HNCII NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME

Chairman : Dr.Sultan Pradhan

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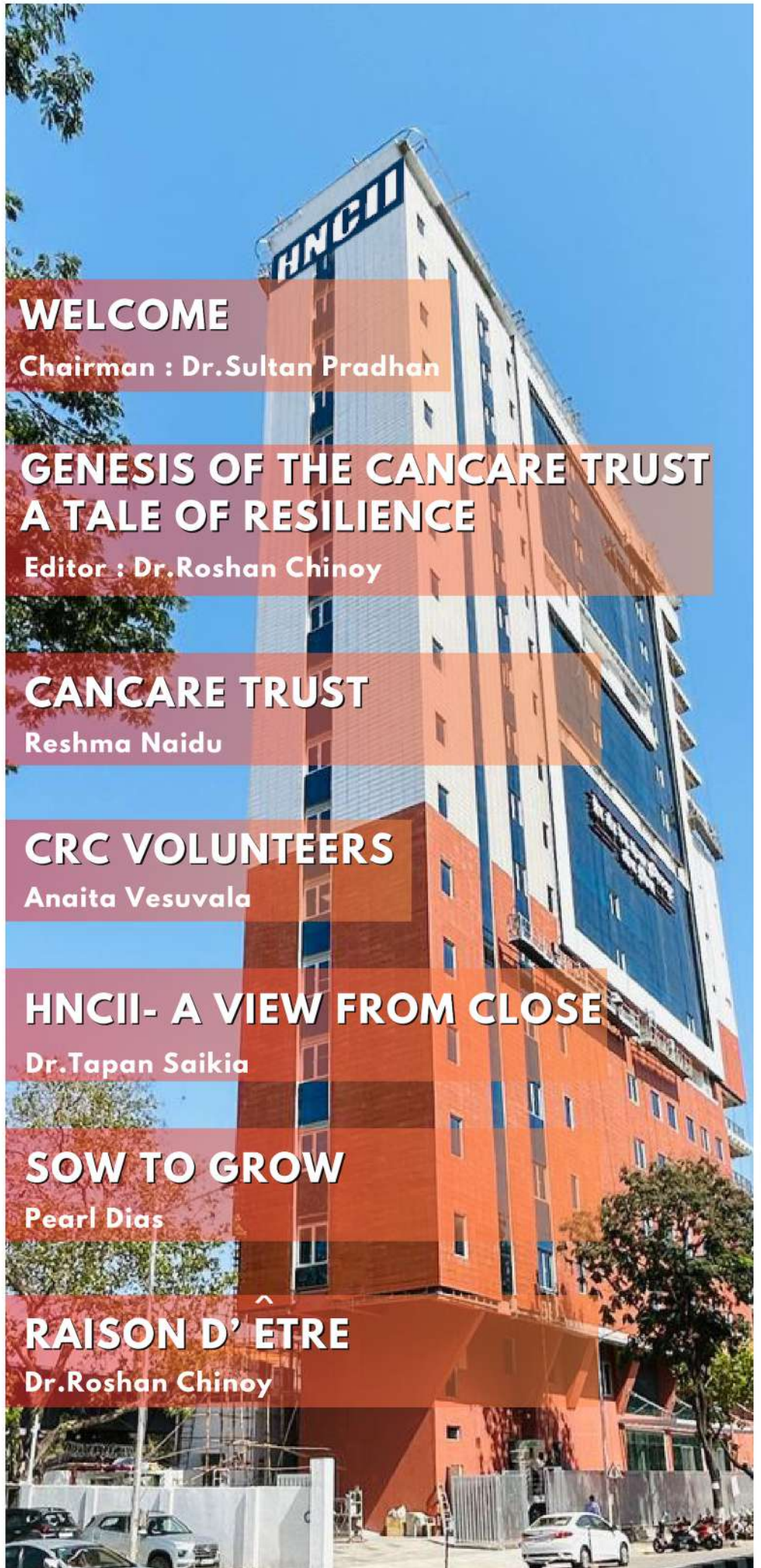
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SOW TO GROW

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Dr. Sultan Pradhan :

Photo by Parsiana - Homyar Mistry - Homz

Welcome To our Newsletter

by Dr. Sultan Pradhan

At the outset I want to inform the readers why we chose **"HEAD & NECK CANCER INSTITUTE OF INDIA"** as our name despite the fact that we will also be treating women's cancers viz breast cancer & gynaec cancers. Head & Neck Oncology is the field that we want to be specialists in: oral, pharyngeal, laryngeal, nasal & paranasal sinus cancers and cancers of the salivary glands, the thyroid & the parathyroids.

As a group these cancers constitute India's most common cancer in men, and the third or fourth most common in women. In order to be relevant to the needs of the nation we will continue to focus our attention to this cancer where, for the past 25 years, with support from the Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation, the Prince Aly Khan Hospital has been involved in developing human resources in head & neck cancers. To continue to do this work, the name "Head & Neck Cancer" was very important. I'm happy to report to you that within less than two and a half months of commissioning, more than 600 surgeries have been performed.

Similar rates of utilisation have started in the medical oncology department and in the diagnostics. The department of radiation therapy & the PET-CT scanner will be commissioned in early December.

An excellently designed facility with attention paid to every department, and dedicated staff comprising a mix of experienced seniors & energetic juniors have made it possible to achieve the rapid success.

The best news that I can give to you in this 1st Newsletter is that the HNCII has been able to attract the very best medical faculty in all the sub specialities of oncology, be it onco pathology, medical, surgical & radiation oncology, imaging & laboratory medicine. These are specialists who have chosen to work full-time at the Institute & give their undivided attention to service, training & research. And in most departments the talent runs at least two or even three levels deep. They will undoubtedly shape the destiny of the HNCII .



The Institute deals with cancer. Patients & their families enter the hospital premises in a state of tremendous anxiety & mental devastation. At every step & stage they encounter the hospital personnel, there is opportunity to ease their tension & worry by guiding them with kindness & reassuring words. The support staff, admin staff, the nurses, technicians & doctors, all can play a very vital role in this. So, this is my humble appeal to all members of the HNCII family: let us make "compassion and empathy" a part of our persona, so that it comes to us naturally, & becomes the organisation's culture.

*One expression that HNCII should stand for,
"touching lives with empathy"*

The Genesis of the “CanCare Trust”

by Dr.Roshan Chinoy

Every rivulet, stream or waterway starts with that first tiny drop of water, that bravely decides to trickle on, against all obstacles, gather forces along the way, grow, and make its way to become a mighty waterfall of beauty and permanence. That first drop of water - was never fated to sink into oblivion. Neither was Mrs. Gulab Naik.

Gulab is the patient who was that first drop of water, that initiated the “CanCare” trust, that grew, to ultimately cascade and become HNCII, - that will carry on.... to save numerous lives.

A gentle patient who suffered from breast cancer, Gulab bore her cross bravely and quietly. She revered her treating surgeon, and Sultan Pradhan gained her trust, admiration, and undying gratitude. Her death came 16 years after her initial encounter with cancer, but she never forgot her doctor. Intuitively she must have fathomed, that it would be her seed money that would be the starting point of something wonderful. At her death, she had instructed her son to gift Dr Pradhan, the sum of Rs 25,000, with prophetic words when she said ***“My doctor will know what to do with this money. Give it to him, as a gift from Gulab Naik.”***



Dr. Pradhan holding a picture of Mrs. Gulab Naik

For the first time in his professional career, Dr Pradhan accepted the “gift” money from a patient and made a beginning by creating a “trust” with the purpose of helping some of his future needy patients.

Naming the trust started as a lighthearted chat between three old friends, Meher, Sultan, and your editor. Playing around by tossing possible names, I suggested the word ‘CanCare’, never seriously imagining that it would meet with approval by my ‘serious’ friends. Unexpectedly, It caught the fancy of Sultan and Meher, who accepted the explanation, that it would mean... “we Can Care for Cancer” with our trust money. It caught on.



Many stories have simple beginnings. So does this. *CanCare* is now synonymous with “LIFE” for our patients, and “HOPE” for their families.

A Tale of Resilience

by Dr.Roshan Chinoy



- The Beginning.....

Cancer is a formidable adversary that leaves indelible marks on patients. Being a chronic disease, it ensures that patients and their doctors will meet at variable points in time and walk the road together in their joint battle against this fierce malignant enemy.

In the heart of this medical battlefield, many simple, quiet, and understated stories remain untold, and some are even forgotten totally. A great loss indeed.

The story I am about to relate, deals with our institute, our people and one of our patients. Even though my story is drastically clipped, I appeal to all our readers to look beyond my words. The commitment, thought, energy, resilience, and hard work that went into the making of the HNCII is nothing short of an impossible dream come true. It involves a promise to reach out and help cancer patients.



Mr. Narotam Sekhsaria and
Dr. Sultan Pradhan



Dr. Meher Elavia

- And now the story.....

Dr Sultan Pradhan, our Chairman and onco-surgeon was treating a patient, a quiet, self-effacing, well-respected businessman, Mr. Narotam Sekhsaria. The patient had undergone surgical treatment for his oral cancer with fortitude, over several years. Being a good listener, he had quietly absorbed a great deal more about 'cancer', than anyone realized. He had quietly understood that the excellent treatment he was getting, was not available to the vast majority of our countrymen who were similarly affected. In the field of head and neck (H&N) cancers, the gap was even wider, because most surgeons were not even adequately trained to deal with this complex cancer, nor were there enough facilities or centres of excellence like the Tata Memorial Hospital. The irony was that H&N cancers are a uniquely Indian problem as it makes up more than 27% all cancers of the body. The West sees only 4% of these H&N cancers.

One day, whilst giving a Jubilee oration at KEM hospital, Dr Sultan Pradhan first described the abject inadequacy and frustrations inherent in the attempts at treating head neck cancer patients in our country. Subsequently, he went on to express his keen desire to reach out to the ENT surgeons and general oncologists of India and train them in the little-known intricacies of head and neck cancer surgery. The appreciative audience rose spontaneously to give Dr. Pradhan a standing ovation. Mr. Narotam, sitting in the audience, was similarly moved by the idea. And that is how the NSFO or Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation Office, starting funding 6 surgeons every year, who would receive 3 years of training in head and neck surgery under the mentorship of Dr. Sultan Pradhan. The Sekhsaria foundation financed and fully supported the fellowship program for more than 25 years, thus training more than 80 surgeons.

Dr Pradhan had also expanded his outreach training program to include the training of ENT surgeons in Nair Hospital, KEM, Sion hospitals in Mumbai, and at B. J. Medical College in Pune. Yet, even now, this did not seem enough to remedy the tragic inevitability of head/neck cancer patients.

In life, roles sometimes get reversed, and a wise Narotam Sekhsaria unobtrusively slipped into the role of a mentor to Sultan. Mr. Sekhsaria became an interested, supportive, and compassionate guru to his own doctor.

Both men shared a common vision of creating a state-of-the-art H&N cancer institute, where doctors would be trained, patients would be treated, and research carried out.

Mr. Narotam Sekhsaria was the Chairman of Ambuja Cement, a leader in corporate social responsibility that had done remarkable work for rural development through agriculture, health and education.

A gesture like quietly handing over a cheque of 50 crores to Dr Pradhan's 'CanCare Trust' cannot be pushed under the carpet. It was a huge donation from the NSFO to the CanCare Trust. This cheque was an affirmation of faith, that someday, somehow, the two men would fulfill their shared vision of creating a better world for cancer victims. Following this donation, many other donors followed suit.

Many people, supposedly wiser than us, chided us.... that we were neither young enough, nor at all knowledgeable in the field of construction and hospital planning. Some sniggered and many laughed at the sheer audacity of the idea. But a few did see the potential for success. Putting up such an institute would stand testimony to the resilient commitment, and dedication for cancer patients. That was the encouragement we needed.

The flagbearer for this task of building a hospital, was a tiny slim 'woman of substance', who displayed amazing tenacity, grit, energy, and a wealth of common sense and intelligence. But for Dr Meher Elavia, the HNCII would never have been built, nor could we have opened our doors to the sea of cancer patients.

Behind my short, capsulated story, there are years of struggle: men and women who stand tall, (*but were shy, and who shunned the limelight*), helping hands, donors, friends, and many patients who silently waited, and hoped that someday their pain would be alleviated, and their cancers - cured.



Our strength

CanCare Trust

by Reshma Naidu

A glance into the CanCare Trust

CanCare Trust is a Public Charitable Trust founded in 1997. The Trust is recognized and registered with the Charity Commissioner of Maharashtra and has been granted tax-exempt status.

Following are the objectives of the Trust:

- a) Financial aid to needy patients for the diagnosis / treatment of cancer and allied diseases.
- b) Promoting human resource development activities in the field of cancer.
- c) Promoting public education related to cancer.
- d) Promoting the development of diagnostic / therapeutic facilities in this same field.



Founder Trustees

The main thrust of the Trust's program has been on providing welfare for the treatment of needy cancer patients especially the weaker sections of the society.

The main source of income is through donations from grateful patients and other philanthropists. The CanCare Trust, had sought to develop a Head and Neck Cancer Hospital (93 Beds) in South Mumbai at an estimated cost of Rs. 240 cr. and which has been funded entirely through donations.

The major contributions are from the Sekhsaria Trust, Tata Trust, H T Parekh Foundation (HDFC Group), Mahindra Foundation, Wipro Philanthropic Company, Cipla Foundation, Damani Group (D MART Group), Aditya Birla Group, Allana Group & Noorani Family.

This hospital in Mumbai, "Head & Neck Cancer Institute of India" (HNCII) stands near Dockyard station. "HNCII" will provide comprehensive services all under one roof viz. surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, ICU support, and diagnostic services.

The hospital will cater to the medical needs of all the victims of the menace of head & neck cancers, and also deal with women's cancers.



The project will provide leadership in prevention, early detection, comprehensive care, research and education. The Centre for Cancers of the Head and Neck and Allied Diseases will base its functioning on the following principles:

- i) Access to Comprehensive Care –The centre will be fully equipped to meet all the needs of the patient through multidisciplinary care, at an affordable cost to all sections of society.
- ii) Training and Education – Emphasis will be placed on awareness and prevention of the disease among the general public as well as on training and certification of all personnel.
- iii) Research – Research will form an integral part of the centre's activity.India must take the lead in addressing a number of unresolved issues in the management of this cancer.
- iv) Collaboration – Collaborations with national and international organizations and institutions involved in similar activities will be forged in order to stay at the cutting edge of H&N cancer in the world. This Centre, aims to be a beacon of hope to individual patients and communities in the fight against one of the most terrible scourges that mankind faces.

**THERE IS A CAN IN CANCER,
AND TOGETHER WE CAN FIGHT IT**



A word about the MCGM: Our Partner

The Head & Neck Cancer Institute of India (PAH-HNCII) is a division of the CanCare Trust, developed as a PPP project by the CanCare Trust in partnership with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). As Trustees of the CanCare Trust, we will be failing in our duty if we do not express our admiration, and gratitude to the leadership and the staff at the MCGM for their unwavering support throughout the nine plus years since the initial permissions were sought till the completion of HNCII & its commissioning.

Despite changes in leadership, whether it was Mr.Kunte or Mr.Ajoy Mehta & now Dr.Iqbal Singh Chahal serving as Municipal Commissioners, their support remained steadfast and consistent.

Not to forget the keen interest, the guidance & the efforts of the various Additional Municipal Commissioners responsible for health, be it Mrs.Manisha Mhaishkar, Mr.Sanjay Deshmukh, Dr.Sanjeev Kumar and now Dr. Sudhakar Shinde. Each of them, as also the various departments of building, engineering, fire etc, played a crucial role in bringing this project to its logical conclusion, right from acquiring the land to obtaining the permissions for commissioning.

And all of this without expecting any favors in return. No corruption was encountered whatsoever at any stage of the project, only support & guidance in fulfilling the statutory norms. The entire Municipal Corporation as also the political leadership's approach has been "Our city needs this project, let us facilitate it". We, the Trustees of the CanCare Trust, salute you, and take immense pride in the fact that we have such a committed and capable civic body managing our city.

Brief Note on the Activities of the CRC

by Anhaita Vesuvala

The CRC group was initiated by Dr Pradhan, who urged me to reach out and support patients, who were afflicted by breast cancer. Most patients who have had surgery for breast cancer, do need emotional support and they need the confidence to get back to life, and live a full and happy life. To look feminine and regain our former zest for life is mandatory for women of all age groups and from all strata of life. Having gone through the trauma myself, I understood the needs quite poignantly.

Our group largely assists patients who undergo breast surgery and laryngectomy (surgery of the voice box) by offering support and after surgery care.



My team of enthusiastic volunteers, some of them survivors themselves, provide counseling and emotional support to the patients and their family members. Personalized attention and emotional support is given to help them regain their confidence, flexibility and strength.

The Mastectomy clinic also provides a variety of prosthesis and bras to facilitate a sense of wellness and normality. Patients are encouraged to talk about their problems and voice their fears. The volunteers, being patients themselves, understand, help and empathize with these ladies.

The Laryngectomy team is committed to help rehabilitate patients who have lost their voice box, and they have made remarkable strides in their work, and brought normality into the lives of so many previously silent sufferers. The team of Rehab Counselors are also available online for consultation.



“CANCER
REHABILITATION CLINIC”

C R C

Initiated 2 decades ago,
has been doing
voluntary work for
cancer patients, who
need **post-operative
care and counselling.**

A View from Close

by Dr. Tapan Saikia



An angel's dream and desire

To have a seat of excelcare,
Went out with all his flair
Sweat and hurdle, deter not this
altruistic kinder

The need of the day
Everyone has a say,
The crab needs to be braked
Through an effort well concerted,

Shared decision making in oncology

Born from understanding the pathology,
Surgery, radiation and posology
Pillars of therapeutic trinity,

More are people come so late
They also need a consolate,
Will have a team to alleviate
Keep a human mood elevate,



Thou shall also be a seat of learning

'Gyaan Peeth' will get young flocking,
Spread the skill so wide
More will come to this field,

Opening the door for quest for unknown
Thou shall be forefront of to be known,
Unfold mystery of the crab so tough
Make healing simple and enough.



Sow to Grow



by Pearl Dias



Training and development are crucial for an organization and staff, enhancing their knowledge, skills, and confidence. This fosters teamwork and nurtures the company culture. Skill-based training, aids in handling workplace and human diversity and improving communication between employees of all departments. When carefully implemented with tact, humor and knowledge, these aspects ensure success and growth.

With over four decades of experience in training and development across various sectors, including Hospitality, Airlines, Retail, and multi-specialty healthcare, I often had to design tailored training modules to meet specific needs.

The success of any organization heavily relies on a skilled and motivated workforce. Thus, aligning training with business goals, ethics, culture, and the organization's ethos is imperative. Leadership is equally vital in any business, regardless of its size or industry. Strong leadership laced with justice and wisdom mitigates risks like high employee turnover, low productivity, and dissatisfied clients.

At HNCII, we are fortunate to work under a strong leadership team that has turned vision into reality. My personal goal is directed towards cultivating a culture of learning and development, empowering individuals to grow both personally and professionally, and deliver higher service standards.

Effective communication skills are essential for a productive and satisfied workforce. They play a pivotal role in reducing biases and conflicts among employees and patients. Gentle but firm "front office professionalism" goes a long way in reducing friction and misunderstandings. Professional training, such as Basic Life Support Training, provides a sense of safety at work during emergencies. We are grateful for Dr. Farooq Buddha's continuous support in this regard. Employee training programs are vital for building cohesive teams and nurturing the company culture.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Farida Calcuttawala for her unwavering support during our journey. Our employees particularly appreciate her sense of humor during Quality and Patient Safety sessions. Additionally, the Infection Control sessions during monthly staff induction, conducted by Sr. Sini and Sr. Daya, provide essential guidance and support.

Investing in staff training not only benefits the business but also enhances employee retention, happiness, motivation, and work-life balance. For a successful training program, we must identify needs, set goals, ensure interactivity, measure success, and continuously improve, using employee and patient feedback as our guides.

Sow to

GROW!



RAISON D'ÊTRE

Editor

by Dr. Roshan Chinoy



India is an incredible land of contradictions and paradoxes. Whilst we have many strengths, healthcare is an issue that could well become the fragile link that shatters our hopes for a robust healthy future.

Getting straight to the point of a serious subject like cancer, which is India's most pressing and fastest growing public health threat, where does India rank in terms of cancer statistics? India faces a massive cancer incidence burden, which continues to grow exponentially every year. The 2020 WHO ranking on cancer burden in India, in terms of newly diagnosed cases has placed India at the third position, after China and the US, respectively. **By 2040, India is expected to lead the world in having the highest burden of cancer in the world.** The growing numbers of cancer patients in India translates to one in ten Indians being affected by the disease in their lifetime, and one in fifteen losing their lives.

The country's cancer burden is only expected to grow, and that too at an alarming rate.

Cancers of the head and neck region are India's most common and formidable cancers, forming 27.5% of all cancers. Contrast this with the meagre 4% head neck cancers seen in Western countries. This, therefore, is a uniquely Indian problem, requiring our urgent attention.

Lifestyle related habits of Indians, viz. chewing gutkha, smoking beedis, and cigarettes account for the very high incidence of mouth throat and voice box cancers.

Facilities for diagnosing and treating H&N cancers are pathetically inadequate in India, and this results in patients waiting for weeks and months before any treatment is initiated.



Dr. Roshan Chinoy

Treatable operable cancers are rapidly converted from curable, to incurable terminal and advanced cancers. The scourge of this disease will not just go away unless we do something about it.

WHY HAVE AN INSTITUTE DEDICATED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THIS CANCER?

For a start, there is a great need to develop many dedicated H&N cancer institutes that would focus on all issues related to this disease. The issues must include:

- Preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic issues
- Palliative and rehabilitation measures should form a major chunk of work to be done.
- Education and training of ENT surgeons, radiologists, and pathologists, particularly in the teaching hospitals and in the public sector
- Research should address the numerous unresolved issues we face in the Indian setting.

Building a state of the art “Head & Neck Cancer Institute of India” was our endeavor to start to fulfill this desperately needed societal obligation. Compassion and empathy for patients will be the driving underlying forces.

The CanCare Trust has already initiated this process of the outreach program. The HNCII will carry on this activity and take it to the next level.

Post graduate education and training programs will be developed to ensure that knowledge is disseminated, and the quality of resident doctors, diagnosticians, ENT surgeons, social workers, and nurses, and all those serving in the field, will be of a high caliber. This cancer requires an army of trained men and women who will deal with the multiple problems the patients face. There will be no compromises in offering state-of-the-art diagnostic surgical and radiological treatment to our patients.

Does all this sound impossible? Not at all. But it needs many willing hands, many dedicated and skilled doctors, philanthropists, and governmental permissions to make it a long-term permanent success.

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY....

Across

3. LIGHT AND BRIGHT

8. ONE OF THE NAMES OF LORD GANESH

9. FOUNDER MEMBER

10. AN INDIAN SURNAME ASSOCIATED WITH PRIME MINISTER

12. THE COLOR BLUE

Down

1. RHYMES WITH MINI

2. AN ARAB CHIEFTEN

4. OLD AND WISE

5. SANSKRIT WORD MEANING COMPASSION

6. SANSKRIT WORD THAT MEANS GRACEFUL

7. OUR RECRUITER

11. OUR NEW MISSION

***DEPARTMENT HEADS**