

Cancer Prevention & World No Smoking Day

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in the world particularly in developing countries. In 2005, 7.6 million people died of cancer out of 58 million deaths world wide. Four components of national cancer control program are prevention, early detection, diagnosis & treatment and palliative care. Over 40% of all these deaths from cancers can be prevented. Others cancers can be detected early treated adequately and cured. Even with late stage cancer, the suffering of patients can be relieved with good palliative care.

Public health education is largely a neglected field in our country. The education and creation of awareness about cancer prevention and early detection can help control lot of suffering, morbidity and mortality from cancer.

The Department of Surgery, King Edward Medical University, in association with the Society of Surgeons Pakistan, WHO and IFMSA organized a public health education seminar on cancer prevention at the KEMU auditorium on May 31. This seminar was opened to general public, medical students and health professionals. Representatives of print and electronic media were also invited to participate in this great nation building task.

A research was conducted by the Research Center of King Edward Medical University under supervision of Prof. Muhammad Arshad Cheema, Chairman Department of Surgery & Director Research along with Dr. Suhaib Umer Research Registrar and Dr. Abdul Rauf PGR. The survey was carried out by a group of medical students from clinical years. Four groups of populations were studied namely medical students, doctors, paramedics and general population. Dr. Hassan Baig, Dr. Mehreen Zameer, Dr. Aimen and Dr. Aisha Batool of final year were the group incharges. Logistics and

publishing was carried out by Dr. Asad and Dr. Safwan. The results of the survey showed that of the 966 individuals interviewed 57% males and 11% females smoke or use tobacco in some form, out of 128 doctors, 28% were smokers while out of 503 medical students 38% were smokers.

Before the seminar there was a walk against smoking from KEMU to Mall Road which was attended by students, doctors and faculty member.

At the end of seminar there was a poster competition. Students from various colleges participated. 1st three posters were given shields. Prize winners included Dr. M. Imran AIMC 1st prize, Nadia Ehsan Garrison College 2nd prize. Nida Tariq Garrison College 3rd prize.

Smoking is linked to at least 15 different cancers and accounts for some 30% of all cancer deaths. Apart from smoking other important measures to prevent cancer include maintaining a healthy life style avoiding foods rich in animal fats and red meat. Diet rich in vegetables and fruits regular exercise and avoidance of alcohol help in cancer prevention. Additional measures include avoiding excess exposure to sunlight and occupational hazards like asbestos and benzene.

Getting oneself vaccinated against Hepatitis B virus is one of the most effective ways of preventing liver cancer. Now cervical cancer can be prevented by getting vaccinated against human papilloma virus. Avoiding risky behavior like drug abuse & sexual promiscuity will largely prevent hepatitis C & HIV infections which are responsible for a number of cases of liver and other malignancies in this country. Cancer of colon in individuals with colonic polyps and ulcerative colitis can be prevented by prophylactic surgery.

Editor