

City doc carries breast cancer cause to Cannes

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Calcutta: A city-based doctor, who participated in a breast cancer awareness campaign at the Cannes Film Festival last month, said early screening is the only way to reduce the disease burden.

Jyoti Gupta, a consultant breast surgeon at HCG Cancer Hospital, Kolkata, spoke at a programme on Friday to raise awareness about the disease, which reportedly causes approximately 1,00,000 deaths annually in India.

Gupta has worked outside the operation theatre to raise awareness about breast cancer. She has been associated with the Mrs India campaign, which took her to the Cannes Film Festival in May this year. She walked the red carpet, sporting the pink ribbon, the global symbol of breast cancer awareness.

"Globocan data show that most breast cancer patients in the west are diagnosed at Stage I or II. However, in India, most cases are diagnosed at later stages. We have all the modern facilities. However, awareness is still not high enough. Far from it. Women know that breast cancer exists. But only a few of them get a mammography done. They keep delaying. Women with heavy breasts may not feel a lump. Only a mammogram can reveal it. Any woman above 40 should get screened for breast cancer once every year," Gupta told **Metro**.

Some of the signs that women should not ignore are:

- A painless lump in the breast or armpit
- Change in breast size or shape
- Nipple discharge
- Nipple retraction
- Persistent breast pain

Globocan stands for Global Cancer Observatory, a database that provides contemporary estimates of the incidence, mortality, and prevalence of major cancer types across 185 countries or territories. It is developed and maintained by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the specialised cancer agency of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

According to an IARC-Globocan 2022 estimate, India recorded 1,92,020 new breast cancer cases, accounting for



Jyoti Gupta at the Cannes Film Festival

26.6% of all cancers in women.

"The disease is associated with middle age, but it can affect younger women as well as elderly women," said a spokesperson for HCG Cancer Hospital.

Breast cancer treatment has undergone significant evolution. Depending on the stage and biology of the tumour, patients may now receive breast-conserving surgery, oncoplastic reconstruction, radiation, chemotherapy or a HER2 targeted therapy.

Targeted therapy is a type of cancer treatment that specifically targets molecules involved in cancer cell growth, division and spread.

HER2 is a gene that plays a role in normal cell growth and division. In some cancers, particularly breast cancer, the HER2 gene can be amplified, meaning it can promote faster cancer cell growth and potentially lead to more aggressive tumours. If HER2 is blocked by a drug, the cancerous cell dies. Patients live longer because cell proliferation stops.

"Breast cancer treatment is a work in progress. We are losing patients because they aren't seeking care in time. International data shows the survival rate for localised breast cancer is over 99% when detected early," said Rupali Basu, regional business head, east and AP, HCG Cancer Hospitals.