

National Conference on New Horizons in Cancer Biology

Empowering Cancer Biology to strengthen fight against cancer

March 16, 2018- Day 1

“National Conference on New Horizons in Cancer Biology” was organized by Cancer Biology Department under the auspices of The Gujarat Cancer & Research Institute (GCRI) and Gujarat Cancer Society (GCS) on **March 16-17, 2018** at J B Auditorium, Ahmedabad Management Association, Ahmedabad. The conference was coordinated by Dr. Pina Trivedi, Cytogenetics Laboratory, Cancer Biology Department. The theme of the conference was *Empowering Cancer Biology to strengthen fight against Cancer*. As today cancer remains a major health problem and one of the leading causes of death worldwide, the need of the hour is basic research in cancer biology that could be translated into clinical practice, together with taking the initiatives for having preventive medicine along with curative measures. Hence, the conference has focused upon this concern by bringing together distinguished scientists from various parts of India and budding researchers to discuss and deliberate on the emerging trends and future prospects of prevention and treatment of cancer. The scientific programme included the keynote addresses and invited lectures of well-renowned and eminent scientists from 13 distinguished institutes all over India to share their noteworthy experiences and highly enlightening theories. The event also included oral presentations, technical talks, young scientist award oral presentations and poster presentations by PhD scholars and post-graduate students. There was a huge participation of students and faculties from different research and academic institutions reaching to more than 450 attendees and around 28 participating institutions.

The first scientific session began at 9.00 am followed by welcome note of Dr. Pina Trivedi. The first session was chaired by Dr. Shashank Pandya (GCRI, Ahmedabad) and Dr. Kirti Patel (GCS Medical College, Hospital & Research Centre, Ahmedabad). The session included the keynote lectures by Dr. Shilin Shukla (GCRI, Ahmedabad) and Dr. T. Rajkumar (Cancer Institute, Chennai). Dr. Shilin Shukla shed light on the importance and coordination of cancer biology with clinical oncology in order to conquer cancer. Dr. T. Rajkumar also explained about the importance of molecular screening of breast cancer and uterine cervical cancers, thereby reinforcing the cancer prevention.

The second session was chaired by Prof. Meenu Saraf (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad) and Prof. Priti Mehta (Nirma University, Ahmedabad). Invited speakers Dr. Gopal Kundu (NCCS, Pune) and Dr. Subhash Chandra Gupta (BHU, Varanasi) enlighten the delegates with their in-depth knowledge on tumor micro-environment and its effect on different upcoming molecules for their utilization in cancer therapy.

The third session was introduced by Dr. Parijath Goswami (GCRI, Ahmedabad) and Dr. Hyacinth Highland (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad). The speaker Dr. Sorab Dalal (ACTREC, Navi Mumbai) gave highlight on chemo- and radio-resistance resulting in tumor progression. The session also included three technical talks following the invited lecture. Dr. Mukesh Jaiswal from Agilent Technologies described about the evolving technologies in cancer genomics. The applications of Droplet Digital PCR in cancer diagnostics, prognosis and disease monitoring were detailed out by Dr. Abhijeet Dixit from BioRad Laboratories (India) Pvt. Ltd. The third technical talk was delivered by Mr. Swapnil Walke of BD Biosciences explaining the advancements in Flow Cytometry for Cancer Biology.

Simultaneously during the lunch session, 69 posters were displayed by Research Scholars and post-graduate students from various Institutes, covering different aspects in the field of cancer research. The posters were viewed and judged by the senior faculties of various state universities and there were fruitful discussions and suggestions from the judges, which will certainly help the students for their future research work. Also, the MSc Cancer Biology students presented a model explaining about the symptoms, causes of cancer formation and also the display the work carried out in various labs of cancer biology department.

The post-lunch session (fourth session) was chaired by Prof. N.K. Jain (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad) and Dr. Neeta Shrivastava (PERD Centre, Ahmedabad). Invited speaker Dr. Madhumita Roy (CNCI, Kolkata) described about the consequence of isothiocyanates over conventional chemotherapy in cervical cancer. The following lecture by Dr. Ajai Kunnumakkara (IIT, Guwahati) focused upon the oral squamous cell carcinoma by explaining the role of AKT kinase isoforms and that silencing of these isoforms inhibits proliferation and survival of oral cancer cells.

The following session (fifth session) was introduced by Dr. Archana Mankad (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad) and Prof. Jigna Shah (Nirma University, Ahmedabad). Invited speaker Dr. Franky Shah (GCRI, Ahmedabad) discussed

about the clinical significance of upcoming Vitamin D signaling pathway in breast cancer. The second lecture by Dr. Madhvi Joshi (GBRC, Gandhinagar) who elucidated upon hereditary breast and ovarian cancer patients and the frequent mutations found in these patients. The scientific programme of Day 1 was concluded by the sixth session which was chaired by Dr. B. K. Jain (M G Science College, Ahmedabad) and Dr. Neeraj Jain (CHARUSAT, Changa). The session included oral presentations by Dr. Dharmesh Patel (Cytogenetics Lab, GCRI), Dr. Jyoti Sawhney (Pathology Department, GCRI) and Dr. Kruti Rajvik (Immunohematology Lab, GCRI).

Inaugural function took place after the scientific sessions of the day. The Chief Guest of the programme was Dr. Jayanti Ravi, IAS. Dr. Hemangini Vora (Immunohematology Lab, GCRI) coordinated the inaugural function. Dr. Prabhudas Patel (Dept. Cancer Biology, GCRI) felicitated the dignitaries present. Padmashri Dr. D.D. Patel and Padmashri Dr. P.M. Shah were felicitated by the Cancer Biology Department. The event was carried forward with an inspirational speech by Dr. Jayanti Ravi. She explicated about the importance of research in healthcare. Madam declared about the health passports to be issued to people of Gujarat. She emphasized that young science students should choose research as career objective. She explained about tremendous scope of research in science. Madam finally concluded her speech by congratulating the department for organizing the conference. The abstract book of the conference was released by Shri Prashant Kinariwala (General Secretary, GCS) and Archival Vistas volume II was released by Shri Kshitishbhai Madanmohan (Secretary, GCS). Archival Vistas is assembled petals of projects, publications, presentations, awards, honors and achievements of Cancer Biology Department (Research Wing) during the period of 2008-2017. The book was meticulously compiled by Dr. Hemangini Vora, Associate Professor at Cancer Biology Department. Finally, vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Pina Trivedi. The inauguration was concluded by national anthem and was followed by dinner of all the delegates.

March 17, 2018- Day 2

The first session on Day 2 of the conference was chaired by Prof. Manjunath Ghate (Nirma University, Ahmedabad) and Dr. Manish Nivsarkar (PERD Centre, Ahmedabad). Invited speaker Dr. Mukul Jain (ZRC, Ahmedabad) methodically explained about the novel and potent tankyrase inhibitor in cancer therapy.

Following lecture by Dr. Kiran Kalia (NIPER, Ahmedabad) detailed out about various pathways in epithelial cancers and the cross-talks amongst them. This was followed by another session that was chaired by Dr. Rajen Tankshali (GCRI, Ahmedabad) and included the third keynote lecture by Dr. Pankaj Chaturvedi (TMH, Mumbai) who brilliantly discussed about the ways to conquer oral cancer.

The next session was chaired by Prof. R.J. Verma (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad) and included lectures by Dr. Babu Rao Vundinti (NIIH, Mumbai) and Dr. Dhanlaxmi Shetty (ACTREC, Navi Mumbai) who explained to the delegates about the role of cancer cytogenetics and mutations in hematological malignancies. The session was concluded by technical talk from Dr. Umang Patel for Qiagen India Pvt. Ltd. who discussed the use of real time PCR in oncogenetics and personalized health care.

The post-lunch session was chaired by Dr. Bhupesh Yagnik (K K Shastri Science College, Ahmedabad) and Dr. Harshang Pandya (M G Science College, Ahmedabad). The session included 12 young scientist award oral presentations that were divided into faculty and student category. There were 7 presenters in the faculty category and 5 presenters in student category. The conference was concluded with the award announcements and valedictory function by Dr. Trupti Trivedi. Finally, Dr. Prabhudas Patel made the closing remarks by appreciating the organizing committee and Cancer Biology Department for working hard to make the conference a grand success.