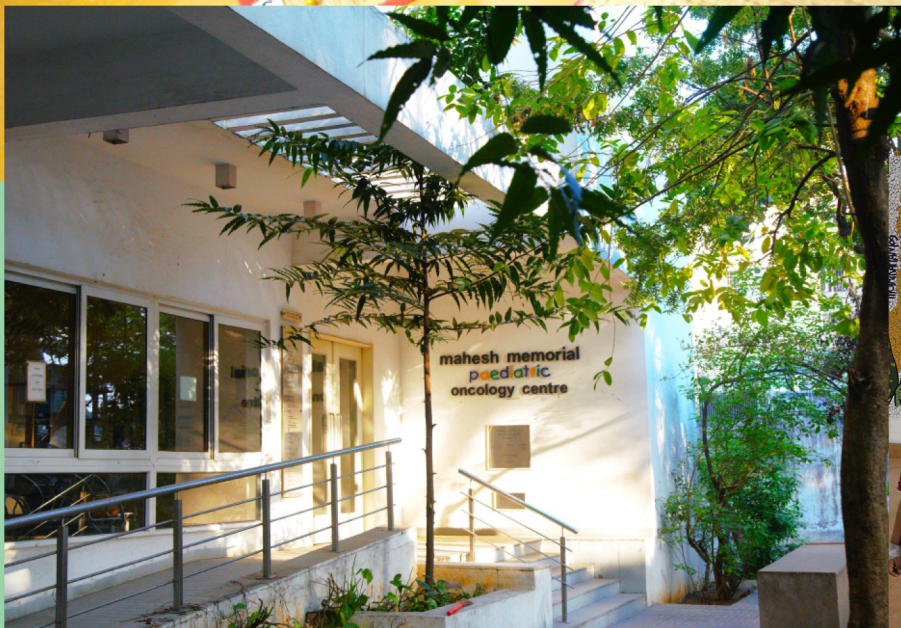




CANCER INSTITUTE (WIA)

Trust | Hope | Cure

March
2023
NEWSLETTER



MAHESH MEMORIAL PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY CENTRE
Fresh air and tender care

MAHESH MEMORIAL PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY CENTRE: Fresh air and tender care

In a row of buildings in the Dr Shanta campus along the Buckingham canal in Gandhi Nagar, the Pediatrics ward is a relatively new three-story building that is painted white, cheerful and neat. An atrium featuring a roof-to-floor Thotta Tharani mural dominates the waiting area. 'Spacious' is the singular sense visitors get, emboldening children to roam than withdraw. The trees filter in sunlight, adding cool shades, emphasizing the feeling of fresh air.

"They shall always have a Tomorrow", is what our late Chairman Dr. V Shanta believed for children with cancer. It was her vision that every child with cancer is provided the best possible care at centres of excellence using standardized protocols as this was the only way to improve outcomes in pediatric cancers in India.

To fulfil this vision she started the first dedicated pediatric oncology center at Cancer Institute in 1960, an era when there were limited facilities to treat cancer in India. The pediatric oncology unit was inaugurated by the late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi. Cancer Institute has significantly contributed towards the development of pediatric oncology speciality in India and has served as a benchmark for other centers. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized Cancer Institute as a centre of excellence for pediatric cancers in the Southeast Asia region.

Yet, imagine the emotional trauma of the innocent children, who hardly know what they are suffering from, sharing the General ward with a crowd of adults with advanced cancers of the oral cavity, breast, and others! Being a Charitable Voluntary Institution, the majority of our patients belong to the lower socio-economic groups and were housed in a general ward – accommodation and treatment is offered free.. Surely, the young patients deserved an environment of their own where they could play around and be blissfully unaware of their disease.

A new era in pediatric oncology was born when a dedicated pediatric oncology centre the "Mahesh Memorial Pediatric Oncology" building was inaugurated in 2009. It houses a one-of-a-kind pediatric oncology center in the country. It has 75 beds including a fully equipped ICU, day-care, Montessori class, playroom, and procedure room.

The new pediatric ward provides a holistic approach towards the treatment of children with cancer, with emphasis not only on medical care but also on psycho-social well-being, nutrition, education and entertainment.

Pediatric oncology is the epitome of multi-specialty care as it requires a coordinated approach between the pediatric oncologist, radiation oncologist, surgical oncologist and other specialties to achieve the best outcomes. Cancer Institute was one of the first centres in the world to espouse the benefits of multi-specialty boards for treating cancer and this was later adopted by other centres in the world. Children with complex oncological conditions are treated at the Institute. The outcomes in pediatric cancers at the Institute are the best in India. The Institute is one of the few charitable hospitals performing bone marrow transplants for children.





Bindu Sebastian has spent 28 years as a nurse in Pediatrics. Talking to children and comforting them is joyful. They don't know their illness, the hospital, the people here. We are the only ones all they know. So the way we interact with them our behaviour gives them confidence. Though she tries to keep hospital and home apart, when she gets close to them through constant interaction, they become family. At home, when her own children get a fever, thoughts and scenes from the ward instantly flash in her mind. At home the complaint has been that she is too soft with her children two boys, now 21 and 14.

In India, children with bone tumors such as osteosarcoma and Ewing's sarcoma were destined to have their limbs amputated for curing their cancer. Amputation leads to poor self-esteem and quality of life for the patients. Cancer Institute was the first hospital in the country to introduce, in the late 1980s, limb salvage surgery for patients with bone tumours. With the introduction of limb salvage surgery, amputation could be avoided in more than 90% of patients with bone tumours.

"Today's research is tomorrow's treatment", late advisor Dr. Krishnamurthy used to say. Cancer Institute has been in forefront of research in pediatric cancers. By

the mid-70s, the success stories in pediatric oncology were becoming evident globally and this was attributed to the setting up of collaborative groups in the USA and Europe. We faced the problem of poor survival in pediatric leukemias despite following western protocols. It was in our search to enhance therapeutic results in pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, that we started the collaborative protocol for treating acute lymphoblastic leukemia (MCP-841) with the pediatric division of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), USA. Dr. Magrath from NCI visited Cancer Institute in the early 1980s to oversee the implementation of the



Geetha Priya is the Clinical Pharmacist who joined in 2020, She has a busy schedule, yet does not feel pressured, as she used to feel in three other hospitals she has worked. She has built a minimal vocabulary in multiple languages. Kids are endearing. Hyper active Chetan tells her: "Why are you going home, just stay with us in the ward".

Dr TK Balaji is Pediatrics Oncologist. His satisfaction comes from seeing sick children improving and going home. The recovery rate of 70% is among the country's best. One good reason is the early referrals in the case of children. Being children, their medical conditions are not neglected and the maladies come to light.

Arsha has spent a couple of months as Dietician here. "Their joy when I distribute the colour pencils and painting books that donors bring, and when I hear them call me "Akka", the feeling is special. On the mornings I feel a bit lazy, that feeling prevails and I come for work".

Some flowers in the garden

Sai Krishna is 10, a 6th standard student from beyond Thiruthani in Andhra Pradesh. He complains of occasional pain in the stomach.



Niha Fathima is two and a half. She has blood cancer. She is like any child her age, pretending to be cooking, when porridge is offered.



Alia Tapusu was not even 1 when she was brought malnourished and losing weight. So her blood cancer treatment had to be delayed. Slowly she gained weight, became active and proved a fighter. She received treatment for blood cancer and improved, giving hope to other patients: if little Alia can defy odds, why not them?...



Surya is sleeping. He has blood cancer. Next to him are a gun and two boats he made, with paper.



Chetan is a bundle of energy, and seen everywhere. He has an automatic smile for anyone. "Why do you go home? Don't you like it here?", he asks the staff.



4-year-old Lakshmi Kalyani was admitted with blood cancer. Stubborn and violent, she would spit out medicines. Over time, she started mingling and has become a normal child. Drawing is her passion.



Jeevanandam is in the 10th. He is at the Institute following a relapse, after treatment at a Salem hospital. He studies in the morning hours. An intelligent and observant child, he now advises parents on how to cope if their children fall sick. Despite fatigue following chemotherapy, he spreads awareness and cheer, giving courage to all around him.

Swetha is 20. She is in the 9th. She has been underweight. "She wouldn't eat even an idli", recalls her grandma. "Swetha has vastly improved", after her bone marrow transplant in 2020. She is back with weight loss. In three weeks, her weight is up, from 28 kg to 31 kg. She remembers with a smile, Pavan Sir, Keerthi Vasanth Sir, BMT Naveen, Abhishek Sir, and nurses Divya, Indumathi, Gauri and Hema. Her dream is to play with friends, and to draw.



protocol. The MCP-841 protocol was later adopted by other centres in India, and thereby initiating the first collaborative research in the country. The collaboration also made possible many research projects, including the impact of socio-economic class in leukemia sub-type and others. Since then, we have come a long way, and our survival rates in pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukemia have improved from 30% to 75%. Many studies conducted at the pediatric unit have been practise-changing across the world. These include the use of fosaprepitant and olanzapine as anti-emetics, showing 2 chemotherapy drugs instead of 3 chemotherapy drugs are sufficient for treating pediatric acute myeloid leukemia and proving that a neutropenic diet is ineffective in patients with cancer.

In the 1960s and 70s majority of the chemotherapy drugs for treating cancer were not available in India and had to be imported. These drugs were costly to import due to

high customs duty, Cancer Institute aggressively took up the matter with the Government of India to ensure that drugs like vincristine used for treating pediatric cancers were easily available and at an affordable cost.

India has the largest burden of childhood cancer patients in the world. However, the true burden of pediatric cancer in the country is not known due to the lack of epidemiological data reporting. We have taken the first step in this regard in India by starting the first dedicated population-based childhood cancer registry in the country, here in Chennai, in 2022. We plan to expand this registry to all of Tamilnadu. Data from the registry will be useful for planning future programmes for addressing the issue of pediatric cancer in India.

Treatment is only one aspect of cancer care. Pediatric cancer survivors need lifelong support to overcome the physical, social and psychological effects of cancer and its treatment. Through the

In a well-lit room, some kids are engaged with Montessori kits. Chithra and Rohini, who run the play room are convinced it enhances motor and mental skills. Any case, much better than getting addicted to the mobile! They talk about 4-year-old Sharath(name changed), a tough one to manage. He would do anything his mind pictures – fall, bang his head on the wall. That left his mother helpless and weeping. Spending time in the play room calmed him a lot. Sponsor Kalvi Trust continues to supplement play equipment.

survivorship clinic, we are supporting the integration of pediatric cancer survivors back into society.

Our goal is to bring smiles to the faces of children and parents, by providing holistic care. Children are the future of this world, and the Institute is doing its best to ensure that we have a bright future.

Dr Venkatraman Radhakrishnan MD DM MSc

*Professor and Head,
Department of Medical Oncology*

The motivation behind the ward

Music Director Mahesh Mahadevan was very appreciative of what he saw and experienced first hand as a patient in the medical oncology block.

In the next bed was a boy, who was very chirpy except on the days his chemotherapy was due. Mahesh wanted children to be happy even if in hospital. Mahesh died when he was 49 and his wife, Chitra Mahesh and some of his friends set out to realise Mahesh's dream. When they met Dr. Shantha and Dr. Krishnamurthy with the idea of creating a pediatric ward, they allocated the land.

A music concert by AR Rahman at the behest of famous Cine Director Maniratnam who was a good friend of Mahesh, and an episode of Kaun Banega Crorepati dedicated to the Children's ward, brought substantial funds. The kindness of many small and large donors ranging from IIT students to major industrialists helped make Mahesh's dream a reality.



Architect Sujatha Shankar, a friend of Mahesh, did her work pro bono, giving shape to the cheerful Pediatric ward.

The architect is "designed with children

in mind, it has visual and physical clarity. the central courtyard is a focal point with the spaces grouped around it and the children are oriented wherever they are".

NABH Accreditation Renewal

UPHOLDING COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Cancer Institute (WIA) has got renewal of its Accreditation for 4 years now, valid till 2026. This follows a recent assessment by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) team of 5, consisting of experts from various hospitals across India.

Over 3 days, this expert group put the processes and practices under the microscope, to ensure conformity to standards. The areas of concern, shortcomings and actionable points, marked as Non-Compliances (NC's) were rectified, re-submitted for approval and were promptly accepted by the external body., it was a 2-way learning process for us & the assessors.

As a premier medical institution, Cancer Institute always wanted to benchmark with the best, firm in the belief that a stringent accreditation benefits all the stakeholders be it patients, staff, insurance, or Third Party Administrator for empanelment. A formal journey in quality was started in 2015, when it approached the NABH to conduct an independent external peer assessment on quality and patient safety. We believe in the six dimensions to Quality Healthcare: Safe, Effective, Efficient, Equitable, Timely and Patient Centered.

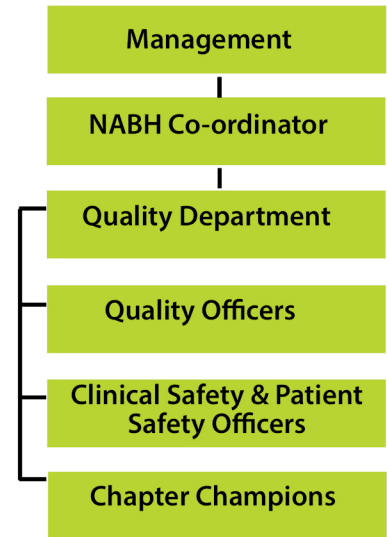
Over the years few systems and

processes have been changed based on the non-compliance raised during assessments.

There is a structured quality improvement and continuous monitoring programme at the Institute. That has been developed and implemented by a multi-disciplinary committee consisting of over 200 staff in different roles, a core team with varied expertise, quality officers, safety officers, chapter champions and quality committees. The Patient Safety and the Quality Improvement programme is effectively implemented jointly with the involvement of all.

The changes on the way have been well accepted. The nurses in particular have become patient safety advocates, with increasing ownership and commitment. There has been a huge amount of learning. Sometimes the schedules are pretty grueling with lot of documentation, which has been managed through better time management and by prioritizing things, making us better planners.

2023 Accreditation Valid till 2026
2022 Re accreditation Assessment
2020 Surveillance Assessment
2019 Final-Assessment



In the implementation of the 651 objectives, with total commitment and the unwavering urge to achieve excellence, there are no shortcuts. Quality is a never ending cyclical process of setting, achieving and resetting the goals for continuous improvement. The smooth sail of accreditation and re-accreditation process is proof of a dedicated commitment to quality by both the Management and the entire workforce of around 1,300 staff, who have taken quality as a work culture ensuring that quality and safety reaches all patients, including the last man in the line.

Mrs Varalakshmi
NABH-Coordinator

WORLD CANCER DAY: CLOSE THE CARE GAP

World Cancer Day, an international day, is marked on 4th February to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. This year's theme marks the second year of the campaign "CLOSE THE CARE GAP" which is about understanding the inequities in cancer care and taking actions to make the necessary progress to address them.

In line with this day, Cancer Institute (WIA) launched "Youth Ambassadors of Cancer Control (YACC) Club" at Educational Institutions & organized an "Awareness Rally, at Elliot's Beach, Besant Nagar" There was Panel Discussion on "Close the Care Gap in Cancer" and a 21-day campaign, challenging the public to adopt a new healthy habit or quit an unhealthy habit.



At the launch of Youth Ambassadors of Cancer Control

MRS MADHURAM NARAYANAN BLOCK GETS A FACELIFT

Mrs Madhuram Narayanan Block has undergone a facelift after renovation and modernization. It has 6 consultation rooms, an emergency ward, 23 patient rooms, two Iodine Treatment rooms among other facilities and other patient friendly features.

The reborn block was rededicated by N Kumar, Vice Chairman of The Sanmar Group and Vijay Sankar, Deputy Chairman of The Sanmar Group on 24th January 2023.

Kumar said, "It is a pleasure to see the Madhuram Narayanan Block, which was named after my mother, renovated and modernized & is heartening to know that this block will provide solace and enhance patient comfort".

R Seshasayee, Chairman, Cancer Institute, recollected the request he



R. Seshasayee, Chairman, Cancer Institute, E. Hemanth Raj, Executive Vice Chairman, Cancer Institute, Sukanya Sankar, Chandra Sankar, Vijay Sankar, Deputy Chairman, Sanmar Group, N. Kumar, Vice Chairman Sanmar Group and C.N. Raghavendran, Managing Director, C R Narayana Rao Architects, at the inauguration of the renovated Mrs Madhuram Narayanan Block.

had made to the former Chairman of The Sanmar Group late N Sankar to renovate and modernize the block that was built in memory of Sankar's

mother in 2000 and how he instantly agreed. He added that the cause was always more important for Sankar than money, although the actual cost was almost double the projected cost, Sankar had no hesitation in giving the go-ahead. "Cancer care was one of Sankar's high-priority objectives and he never hesitated to extend his support for the cause", said Seshasayee.

"The Sanmar family members truly appreciate the work of an Institute of this stature that has done unparalleled work", said Vijay Sankar. He revealed that the uplift of this building was very close to his father's heart and was one of the final projects he had signed. "It gave him comfort that the project was on track. His final wishes have now been fulfilled."



9th Annual Conference of the Indian Musculo-Skeletal Oncology Society (IMSOS)

3rd to 5th March 2023 at The Hilton, Chennai.

Theme: Integrating Care to Improve Outcomes in Musculoskeletal Oncology.

Esteemed International faculty. Various workshops for surgical, medical, pediatric and radiation oncology, pathology, psycho oncology and onco physiotherapy

A multidisciplinary Quiz on sarcomas and Sarcoma awareness run

Organiser: Cancer Institute (WIA), Adyar, Chennai

<http://imsos2023.com/>

BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT THERAPY - SINCE 1995

Cancer Institute (WIA) is one of the major centres offering bone marrow transplant for cancer patients in the state of Tamil Nadu and also in Southern India. Bone marrow transplant (BMT), also known as stem cell transplant, is the medical procedure to replace diseased bone marrow with healthy stem cells. It is an essential part of therapy for many malignancies of the blood and a few other cancers as well.

Our journey into the complex field of bone marrow transplantation started nearly 3 decades ago. The founders of the institute realised that this was a cutting-edge technology that we needed to adopt. There were no established transplant centres in India at that time, so Professor. T .G. Sagar went to the Netherlands to get training in the technique of BMT. After his return, the institute performed its first bone marrow transplantation procedure in the year 1995.

Our journey was not a smooth one and we had to cross many a hurdle along the way. When we started doing transplant we quickly realised that we cannot simply ape ? copy the west in bone marrow transplant. Most hospitals in the west perform transplants in standard hospital rooms. The high level of multi-drug resistant microbes in India and the poor quality of the environment meant that it is not feasible to do transplant in a normal hospital room. A dedicated HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Air Filter)-filtered transplant unit with a high level of control of the environment was found to be mandatory for doing stem cell transplants in India.

The first transplant unit was a 3-bedded ward with HEPA-filtered rooms established in the Medical Oncology Block in 2007. This was expanded to a 5 bedded unit in 2013. We shifted to the new transplant unit, which started functioning in September 2020, and is equipped with 9 state-of-the-art rooms to provide the sterile environment required for conducting a stem cell

transplant. In November 2022, with the refurbishment of the old ward in medical oncology block, – our transplant unit has expanded further. With a total of 17 beds, we are one of the largest transplant units in the region.

Bone marrow transplant is a complex and expensive procedure. Arranging finances for the transplant was the other problem we faced. India has a population of over 140 crores. Among them Indians, 5% can afford the best treatment available, 25% belong in the middle class with increasing income and the remaining 70% cannot afford a transplant unless it is free of cost. In the absence of other established transplant centre other than corporate hospitals, Cancer Institute WIA was and still is at the forefront in treating bone marrow transplant cases from the lower socio-economic strata. We take immense pride in managing case referrals from other cancer centres across the state for bone marrow transplant.

One other problem we faced was the lack of fully matched stem cell donors. The ideal donor is a fully matched healthy sibling. Many of our patients who needed a transplant were unable to undergo the procedure due to lack of a suitable donors. We did our first haplo-identical transplant, (also known in lay mans language) as a half-match transplanted. It uses healthy, blood-forming cells from a half- matched donor who is a family member - to replace the unhealthy ones.



Since 2014 we have performed over 30 such transplants, with parents / children of the cancer patient as their donor. We have also obtained donor stem cells via stem cell registries based in India and Germany. Since 2016 we have performed 12 such Matched Unrelated Donor transplants (a.k.a MUD transplants) over the past 27 years, we have performed over 580 successful hematopoietic stem cell transplants (as bone marrow transplants are scientifically described). With better facilities we have been able to cater to a growing population of patients with blood cancers who need a transplant. In the past ten years alone, we have performed close to 400 transplants, including 155 allogeneic stem cell transplants (where healthy donors stem cells are infused into a patient). The predominant indication for allogeneic transplant has been blood cancers like acute leukemia (AML and ALL), Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML), and Myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS).

We have also performed 252 autologous stem cell transplants (where a patient's own stem cells are collected and later infused back). The common indications are again blood cancers like lymphoma and myeloma. Besides these, we have also performed around 25 transplants for other malignancies like germ cell tumors, Ewing's sarcoma and neuroblastoma.

We have a great transplant team consisting of 8 transplant physicians, comprising both adult and pediatric transplanters. We also have a weekly transplant board that dissects and analyses all transplant issues in detail. Teamwork and the ability to offer this life-saving procedure to all patients irrespective of their economic status remains our strength.

Dr.Parathan Karunakaran MD, DM

*Associate Professor,
Department of Medical Oncology*

International Brain Tumour Awareness Week

BRAIN TUMOUR SURVIVORS MEET

The 16th International Brain Tumour Awareness Week was held from October 29 to November 5, 2022, the world over. Organized by the International Brain Tumour Alliance, the week encourages activities that draw attention to the particular challenges of brain tumor and the need for increased research efforts in neurosurgery. A brain tumor is a development of abnormal cells in your brain which can be cancerous or non-cancerous, causing symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, fits and blurring of vision.

To commemorate this international event, Department of Neurosurgery conducted a meeting on November 5th, 2022, at the Dr S.Krishnamurthi Campus. Dr Vijay Sundar, Consultant Neurosurgeon, welcomed the gathering that included survivors of brain tumors and their relatives. He

dealt with the recent developments as also the myths and facts about brain tumors. Dr E.Hemanth Raj, Executive Vice Chairman, Cancer Institute(WIA) explained the numerous neurosurgical facilities available at the hospital.

It was heart-warming to hear patients who shared their experiences about their illness and their winning battle against cancer despite immense challenges faced by each of them. Patients who shared their feelings in the meeting included 17-year-old Ranjitha, 50-year old Ratnabai and 18-year old Sayed Aman.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Dr Surendran, Head of the Department of Psycho oncology,

Dr Nivedhyaa Raghavan
Department of Anesthesia

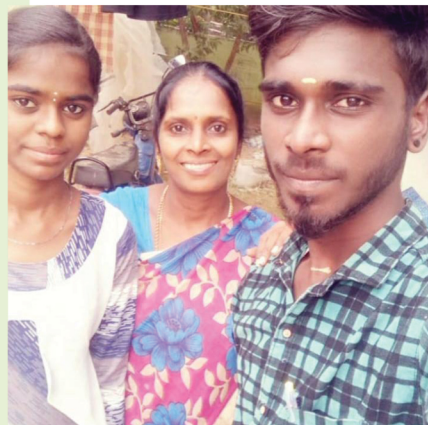


The star at the meeting was arguably a twelve-year-old Pramosh who was accompanied by his mother. The boy hails from a small village in Kallakurichi. He underwent a surgery in May 2022 and is now back to school and studies. Recalls Manjula, Pramosh's mother: "My family was shattered when we were told that my son's fits, headache, and vomiting were due to a tumor in his brain. We were referred to Cancer institute for further management. Dr Vijay Sundar explained all about cancer, cleared our doubts including my son's and convinced us about the need for an immediate surgery. My son received good attention and immediate treatment. Now he is back on his feet playing with his friends and studying well at school."



Dr. V. Surendran, Head of Psycho oncology, Dr. E. Hemant Raj, Executive Vice Chairman and Dr. Vijay Sundar, Neurosurgeon, with the survivors

Lakshmi (centre) was operated upon for a life-threatening brain tumor at Cancer Institute in June 2021 and her recovery after surgery was amazing. "The doctors and the nurses at Cancer Institute took good care of me and assured that surgery could remove the tumor completely from the brain. I am a single mother taking care of two children and for their sake, I have to live. Thankfully I am free of the brain cancer now after a successful surgery." Lakshmi said with tears filling her eyes.



A brain tumor is a development of abnormal cells in your brain which can be cancerous or non-cancerous, causing symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, fits and blurring of vision.

THREE VETERANS



Three senior anesthesia technicians who have worked together at Cancer Institute(WIA) for more than 30 years share their thoughts on why they continue to work in their alma mater.

S.Santhi

The senior most anesthesia technician today is S Santhi, proud to be one of the longest-serving employees at the hospital, with 36 years of service.. Santhi joined Cancer Institute on 17th October 1986 as a nursing assistant in the operation theatre. She has assisted Dr Shantha and the advisor Dr Krishnamurthy in many surgeries. Her outstanding work left Dr N.C.Krishnan, the then head of the anesthesia department, impressed. She got absorbed into the anesthesia department as a technician. Work could be a pain, but Santhi makes it look so easy and does her work diligently and elegantly, seeking perfection.

Santhi's take on her job is comprehensive and educative: "Being an anesthesia technician is very demanding and it involves planning. Every morning you have to come early to check the anesthesia machines, check anesthesia gas and oxygen levels, get medicines ready for the anesthetists, help them in anesthetizing the patient and position the patient during the surgery. Checking the machines and medications are important because it involves patient safety. Most cancer surgeries can go on for several hours. We have to be with the anesthetist and monitor the patient vigilantly until the end of the surgery which may even be early next morning. We also have

to clean the theatre and get all the equipment ready for the next day before we leave. Work comfort, job satisfaction and passion for anesthesia push me to work and do better every day".

Santhi's husband is Ambikapathy, a driver at Madras Transport Corporation and they have two daughters. The elder daughter A Vidhyalakshmi is an engineer and got recently married. The younger daughter A Induja is a graduate of Commerce

Raj Mohan A

Popularly known as Mohan, Raj Mohan hails from Kumbakonam. Soon after completing his twelfth standard, he shifted to Chennai and selected for a two-year apprenticeship at the Cancer institute on 22nd July 1991. Thereafter, he was roped into the institution as an anesthesia technician. Rajmohan was trained by Col Dr N.C.Krishnan, who moulded him into a super-efficient anesthesia technician. Apart from being a permanent in-house anesthesia technician, Rajmohan is responsible for uninterrupted oxygen supply to the entire hospital and providing clean sterile surgical instruments in the operation theatre every day. He is tall and slender and works like a busy bee ever ready to help in any given situation in the operation theatre which makes him a remarkably efficient theatre technician.

Mohan got several opportunities to work abroad, however, refused them and continues to work diligently in this institute. "The work at our hospital helps me render good services to our patients,

which makes me feel good every day. Although I do the same work daily, my work involves a lot of physical and mental activity. Even small mistakes including changes in medicine dose are unacceptable. This is what I teach my BSc technician students as well".

Raj Mohan's wife is A Sasikala, M A and B Ed, a Tamil teacher for senior school students. They have a son R Saran who is pursuing engineering.

S.Bama

After high school, Bama wanted to become a nurse. Bama joined this institute on 10th February 1992 as a nursing assistant. In 1998, she became an anesthesia technician. Why the shift? Bama laughs and explains, "Job is easy if you do what you like. I have admired the job as an anesthesia technician and so joined the team and I have no regrets at all. I love my job and learn something new every day".

"I am thankful to this institution for everything I have in my life now. This hospital educated me and has supported me for these years and I have grown with this hospital. This is why I continue to work here" she says with confidence in her eyes and a smile.

Bama is married to Ramesh who is a driver. They have two daughters, R.Bhuvaneshwari and R.Thirupurasundari.

Today we have 9 anesthesia technicians and 27 BSc anesthesia technician students in the team. However, Santhi, Mohan and Bama have stood the test of time. They earned their diploma in anaesthesia technician degree between 2011-2013 amidst their family life and work. They are also certified basic life support providers in emergencies. They have worked under four chiefs in anesthesia namely Dr Usha, Dr Colonel Krishnan, Dr Ramkumar and Dr Kalpana.

"Time and material management were taught to us by surgeons Dr Shanta, advisor Dr Krishnamurthy and we continue to follow this principle".

Dr Nivedhyaa Raghavan
Department of Anesthesia

THE POWER PEOPLE

For medical facilities, electrical departments serve as essential support centers. The Electrical Department at the Cancer Institute makes sure that all personnel, patients, and visitors receive uninterrupted power services and maintenance around the clock. For a comprehensive medical centre, few services are more crucial than reliable power supply.

As the head of Electricals Department, P Namasivayam accepts the task of offering dependable electrical services at the Cancer Institute as his mission. Including Mariappan, he has a 20-member-strong team. Both Namasivayam and Mariappan recall their interactions with the late Dr. Shanta with affection, and they credit the management and staff for their love and support in making their jobs enjoyable. They are pleased that the Institute has given them the chance to pursue higher education degrees. Namasivayam fondly recollected that "Hanuman" was the favourite serial of Dr Shanta and he ensured that power did not fluctuate during the telecast.

There are 4 power transformers and 6 power backup generators connected for a load of 7500 KVA. They power 700 fans, 2,000 tube lights, 13 lifts, 200 ACs, 15 packaged AC units, 4 chiller plants, 8 RO plants, 50 water pumping motors, 85 UPS, 11 Operation theatres and all medical equipment including ventilators, cots, both at Dr S K Krishnamurthy and Dr V Shanta campuses.



The main threat to the Department's operations come from flooding.

There was one Diesel Generator at the main centre in 1998. This Diesel Generator failed to work during the incessant rains. Consequently, there was no power for 16 hours. The patient and laboratory services were affected.

The 2015 floods were worse. There was no power at both campuses for nearly 2-3 days. Power supply to the entire Institute was supported by the generator. The petrol bunks were shut and it was not possible to replenish the diesel stock. The management decided to temporarily close down the noncritical departments to tide over the situation. Four of the electrical staff stayed back for these three days. A S Senthil Kumar suffered hand injury during fault identification of the Main Switch at the Surgical Block. Thankfully, he recovered after appropriate and timely treatment.

The department diligently averted at least four major fire accidents. They maintain a robust fire safety system.

Besides the affection and support they receive, they are grateful the Institute has given them the chance to pursue higher education degrees. Both Namasivayam and Mariappan have completed B.Tech.

Dr Y Swapna

Department of Transfusion Medicine

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First prize for Poster by Dr Daniel Raj

Dr. Daniel Raj of Department of Pain and Palliative care presented a poster titled "Management of Malignant bowel obstruction in the community. A single centre experience." for the 30 th International Conference of the Indian Association of Palliative Care (IAPCON23) held between Feb 9th-12 th 2023. The poster garnered a lot of interest and fetched the first prize among 142 entries.