



Ensuring accessible, affordable, and comprehensive care for cancer patients in rural central India

At Jan Swasthya Sahyog, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh



Low and middle-income countries like India account for almost 80% of the global cancer burden (loss from death and disability) but only 5% of global spending on cancer. Here at JSS, cancer is one of the most common illnesses seen at our hospital that require chronic care. In five years, we saw 1,778 new patients with various forms of cancer.

The diagnosis of cancer is devastating anywhere in the world. Here in rural Bilaspur, the burden of disease is made worse by poor accessibility of health care services, lack of affordability of such services, and the compounded financial burden of treatment costs and income loss. All of our cancer patients are poor, and many come in moderately or severely malnourished; the median weight for adult tribal women with cancer was 40.3 kg, or 88.8 lbs.

Unfortunately, most of our patients also come to the hospital in the late stages of their disease. This can be attributed to poor accessibility to quality and affordable health care in the region. JSS offers significant subsidies, providing comprehensive cancer care to patients who would otherwise be unable to receive the necessary treatment. We also started providing palliative care services four years ago with the training of a doctor and nurse and recent availability of morphine.

Chemotherapy is made available at low cost by acquiring quality generics from the wholesale market, and substantial additional discounts are given to those who still cannot afford. Surgery for cancers is done routinely at JSS with the addition of an honorary surgical oncologist to the team. In the past two years, over 400 oncology related surgeries were performed.

Cancer type	Men		Women	
	Number of patients	Percent	Number of Patients	Percent
Genitourinary (Cervical for women)	63	10.34	601	51.41
Ovary	0	0	68	5.82
Breast	0	0	154	13.17
Oral	177	29.06	94	8.04
Gastro intestinal	134	22	71	6.07
Others	235	38.59	181	15.48
Total	609	100	1169	100



Delay in diagnosis and treatment of cancer is a major issue in rural Chhattisgarh, due to inaccessibility and unaffordability of health care services. JSS conducts cancer screening camps and provides treatment subsidies to lower the barriers to timely, life-saving treatment and care.

Identifying and Addressing Gaps in Cancer Care

What we are doing

- Preventing delays in diagnosis and treatment through women's health and cancer screening camps
- Reducing interruptions and cessations of treatment among poor patients by providing treatment subsidies and telephone reminders
- Providing comprehensive cancer care through the creation of a chemotherapy day care unit
- Ensuring adequate nutrition through the provision of high calorie, nutrient-rich food supplements

What remains

- A full time counselor to follow up with patients and address issues of adherence
- Subsidies for cancer related investigations, such as MRIs, CT scans, immunohistochemistry, ERCP and stenting, and tumor markers
- Full time trained nurses to staff chemotherapy day care unit
- Bring palliative care closer to patients' homes through subcentre clinics and home visits
- Collect and report patient information to a central cancer registry for monitoring and evaluation of cancer care

How you can contribute

In order to provide comprehensive cancer care to all of our patients, regardless of gender, location, or socioeconomic status, Jan Swasthya Sahyog requires \$42,308 over the next year.

\$100 will support imaging and pathology costs for a cancer patient (CT, MRI, histopathology, immunohistochemistry)

\$200 will support a major surgery for a poor patient

\$400 will support the average chemotherapy costs of a patient with a common malignancy

\$1000 will support comprehensive care of a cancer patient, including diagnosis, surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy

This money will go toward supporting the physicians, nurses, and other hospital and community staff members who manage and treat our cancer patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also will go toward providing subsidies so that even our sickest and most poor patients have access to quality treatment, which we believe is a basic human right. Finally, this money will go toward the development and expansion of our cancer services, so that we can better serve our cancer patients' needs.

Improving Cancer patient care at Jan Swasthya Sahyog	
Salary	
Physician for cancer care including Palliative care	\$5,538
Nurse for palliative care	\$2,215
2 nurses for day care chemotherapy administration	\$4,431
Counsellor cum social worker	\$2,769
Data entry operator	\$2,031
Salary Subtotal	\$16,985
Non Salary	
Subsidy for drugs, special investigation for needy patients	\$14,769
POL for field visits	\$5,538
Phone charges for patient reminders and follow up	\$462
Linen, housekeeping and waste disposal needs	\$308
Non Salary Subtotal	\$21,077
Non Recurring Expenses	
Beds (8)	\$2,092
IV stands (8)	\$222
Chairs (12)	\$148
Treatment trolley (2 units), Wheel chair (1 unit)	\$462
Tables (2 units), cupboard with drawer (2 units)	\$554
Computer with printer	\$769
Non Recurring Expenses Subtotal	\$4,246
Grand Total	\$42,308