



Dear members of the media,

Thank you for attending this conference and for taking a closer look at one of the deadliest diseases in the history of mankind and its causes, effects and possible cures in the beautiful Himalayan state of Nepal. The Breast Cancer Patients' Benefit Foundation (BCPBF) New Delhi, decided to hold this conference in your country, specifically to afford our support, assistance and experience to cancer specialists and patients in your country and to offer any help that may be needed for the poorest of poor patients here to combat the dreaded disease.

The BCPBF is also here to instill and awaken greater awareness in non-medical Nepali citizens, and to assure them that we will be there for the underprivileged in your country, in the same way as we have been for all other cancer patients of modest or few means all over South Asia for more than two decades.

Finally, the BCPBF is here to showcase the latest developments and trends in the treatment of cancer and to present these to the experts and the general public, in the hope and certainty that our professional colleagues but also the Government of Nepal is kept abreast with the latest trends and hope-giving research news from India and other countries.

To us, the statistics on Nepal drawn from the international and Nepali media on the incidence of cancer in Nepal have been cause for worry for some time now.

About 40000 of your fellow countrymen and women are afflicted by cancer. With rising urbanization and - therewith the almost inevitable rise in so-called 'lifestyle' diseases, breast cancer, especially and including male breast cancer, is on the rise. There were 228 recorded cases of breast cancer in Nepal in 2012 alone, with 5% of the cases being males. According to news reports, the percentage of male breast cancer patients in Nepal is higher than in any other country. Most infertile women above the age of 30 were afflicted with breast cancer in the same year.

The other kinds of cancers afflicting Nepali men and women which have stood out in recent headlines have been construction-related cancers.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) asbestos is one of the worst carcinogens that causes almost 50% of deaths related to what we call 'occupational cancer, including and especially lung cancer. Asbestos, or rather its fibers, are breathed in by construction workers from the ambient air as well as from indoor air in houses and buildings that use the carcinogenic material, whose import and export have been banned in more than 40 countries around the world.

And yet, troubling statistics persist all over South Asia.

The Department of Customs in Nepal confirms, according to a news report, that more than 1000 tonnes of asbestos were imported for construction work in Nepal in the fiscal year 2012-1013, specifically in Maitghar, for use in road construction work. Even in India, asbestos has yet to be banned effectively.

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"Cervical cancer, too, is especially common in the lower socio-economic strata in Nepal, " points BCPBF President and India's leading cancer surgeon, Dr Sameer Kaul. "And as the local gets more urban, breast cancer takes over."

Dr Kaul stresses that the same demographic changes in any given country and not just in Nepal, lead to a rise in cancer. "More affluence, more urbanized lifestyles almost always means 'life in the fast lane' is cancerous, and dangerously so," he warns.

Among the so-called 'lifestyle' cancers, the leading cancer specialist points that those of the lungs, head and neck lead the dubious and dismal statistics, mostly because of chewing and smoking tobacco.

"We must make people and our Nepali neighbours aware of our own experience with mankind's so-called evolution," he says. "Nepal may be marginally behind in terms of infrastructure, but not in terms of excellent professionals. It is those colleagues whom I would request to motivate their authorities for the speedier implementation of professional training and the installation of urgent infrastructure in Nepal like PET-CT scanners and other sophisticated technology, which would help them diagnose, identify and help those suffering from this dreaded disease," he says, in an impassioned appeal to his professional colleagues in Nepal.

The BCPBF would be happy to help in both setting up infrastructure and in any other way that its professional counterparts in Nepal deem fit and is confident that this conference in Kathmandu - **INDO NEPAL CANCER SYMPOSIUM** will be a curtain-raising precursor to many more fruitful interactions that will help reduce and ultimately remove the blight of mankind's most dreaded disease from Nepal.

Our members would be pleased to interact either individually, or collectively with the members of the press during this stay and even after our return to New Delhi. Our coordinates are as below.

Distinguished members of the media, we thank you for your support and solidarity in our quest to eradicate cancer and ease the suffering of poor patients in our region.

**Sumeet Nair, Member**

**Mridul Arora, General Secretary**

**Breast Cancers Patient Benefit Foundation**

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