



CANCER HEALTH CARE IN INDIA - GS III MAINS

Q. Cancer is already the third leading cause of death in India. Enumerate the causes of cancer in India and bring out the initiatives taken by the government to control cancer deaths in India. (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *Free cancer care alone won't help India fight cancer | Explained*

What's in the news?

- According to one estimate, 20 lakh people a year will be diagnosed with cancer in India. Cancer is already the third leading cause of death in India by 2040.

What is cancer?

- Cancer is a disease in which some of the body's cells grow uncontrollably and spread to other parts of the body.
- Cancer can start almost anywhere in the human body, which is made up of trillions of cells.

Types of cancer:

- The rates of cervical and smoking-related cancers have gone down in India as well.
- However, the incidence of lung and breast cancers has increased.

Trends:

- One in nine Indians will develop cancer during their lifetime.
- One in 68 men will develop lung cancer
- One in 29 women will develop breast cancer.

Women v/s men:

- The incidence of cancer is higher among women — 103.6 per 100,000 in 2020 compared to 94.1 among men.
- Among men, the most common cancers were of:
 - Lung
 - Mouth
 - Prostate
 - Tongue
 - Stomach
- For women, they were:
 - Breast
 - cervix
 - Ovary



- Uterus
- Lung

Government initiatives related to cancer treatment:

- **National Cancer Control Program:** Under this program, the government allocates resources to build and upgrade cancer treatment centers in underserved regions.
- **Telemedicine:** Under the telemedicine system, cancer awareness and treatment facilities reached rural and remote parts of the country.
- **PM Jan Arogya Yojana:** Free medical treatment is provided for cancer treatment upto 50cr people in the country through empanelled hospitals.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Cancer Pension:** Haryana, Tripura, and Kerala have also floated a 'cancer pension' to financially assist patients with advanced-stage cancer: Rs 2,500 per month in Haryana and Rs 1,000 in Tripura and Kerala.
 - The Union government can roll out cancer pensions across the country.
- **Cancer care center:** Both Union and State governments can set up public funded cancer care centers.
- **Awareness creation:** Awareness should be implemented about cancer related schemes with main focus in rural areas.
- **Comprehensive linkages** between screening centres and hospitals are essential to reduce cancer mortality in the country.
- **Preventive Measures:** Promote healthy lifestyles, discourage tobacco use, and emphasize the importance of regular screenings and vaccinations (e.g., HPV vaccine for cervical cancer prevention).
- **Subsidized Treatment:** Provide subsidies for cancer treatment, especially for economically disadvantaged patients, through government schemes and insurance programs.
- **Research and Development:** Invest in cancer research and innovation to develop cost-effective treatments and diagnostics. Encourage partnerships between government, academia, and the private sector.