

Oncosphere 2025: Event Report

Date: 18th February, Tuesday, 2025

Venue: Seminar Hall 530, R&D Block

Time: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Overview

The Oncosphere event featured a variety of activities, including cancer awareness stalls, survivor stories, and engaging activities. A key highlight was the panel discussion titled **"United by Unique for Cancer"**, which provided insights from a diverse panel comprising an oncologist, a survivor, a caregiver, and a behavioural researcher. The discussion aimed to offer a holistic view of cancer care, emphasizing patient-centered approaches and multidisciplinary treatment strategies.

Additionally, a flash mob was conducted in front of Block 1, on the island, before lunch, drawing attention to the cause and engaging the audience in an interactive manner.

Panel Discussion

Theme: #United by Unique for Cancer

Key Discussion Topics:

- **Precision Oncology:**
 - Tailored treatments and personalized medicine
 - Safe and effective cancer cures
- **Quality of Life in Oncology:**
 - Multifactorial care and its significance
 - Evidence-based treatment approaches
- **Psychosocial Aspects of Cancer Care:**
 - The role of psycho-oncologists
 - Addressing patient and caregiver burnout
 - Barriers in accessing psychosocial support

Panelists:

1. **Dr. Avinash** - Oncologist
2. **Ms. Rhea Daruvala** - Psycho-Oncologist, Mazumdar Shaw
3. **Martin** - Stage 4 Gallbladder Cancer Survivor
4. **Fiona Martin** - Caregiver and Founder of Caregiver Connect

Key Takeaways from the Panelists:

Martin – Cancer Survivor:

- Highlighted the importance of a **curated diet and regular** exercise in his treatment journey.
- Expressed a need for **early-stage counselling**, rather than it being introduced at the end of life.
- Emphasized that **psychosocial support should be integrated from diagnosis onward**.

Ms. Rhea Daruvala – Psycho-Oncologist:

- Works in a pediatric oncology setting, highlighting the **scarcity of psycho-oncologists (only 3-4 handling 40-60 patients)**.
- Advocates for proactive mental health support for cancer patients and caregivers.
- Encourages patients to **vet medical information through professionals** to combat misinformation.

Fiona Martin – Caregiver:

- Shared personal experiences as a **primary caregiver for her father and mother**.
- Described the **emotional and physical toll** of caregiving, emphasizing burnout and helplessness.
- Addressed **financial toxicity**, highlighting the burden beyond treatment costs, including counselling expenses.
- Spoke about **substance abuse among caregivers** as a coping mechanism.

Dr. Avinash – Oncologist:

- Stressed that **patient preferences are final**, even in cases where treatment refusal is involved.
- Spoke about the **psychological challenges faced by both patients and caregivers**.
- Highlighted the **need for a psychological team in cancer care**, working alongside the medical team.
- Identified barriers such as **lack of confidence in psycho-oncologists by both physicians and patients**.
- Suggested **integrating psycho-oncologists with treating teams** to enhance patient care.
- Emphasized **hope as a crucial aspect of cancer care**.

Discussion on Substance Abuse and Cancer

- **Dr. Avinash:** Recommends **periodic awareness programs** to educate the public on substance abuse prevention.
- **Ms. Rhea Daruvala:** Advocates for **more public lectures** and **safe spaces** for individuals seeking help without stigma.
- **Fiona Martin:** Highlighted that caregivers **often turn to substances as a coping mechanism**, leading to dependence and addiction.

Technology in Cancer Care

- Martin shared insights on how **advancements in digital communication and medical records** have improved cancer care.
- However, he also noted that **easy access to online medical information can lead to patient distrust in professionals.**
- Ms. Rhea emphasized that **psycho-oncologists play a key role in helping patients navigate and interpret medical information.**

Final Thoughts

- **Psychological well-being must be an integral part of oncology care.**
- **Counselling services should be introduced early in the cancer journey.**
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration between oncologists and psycho-oncologists is crucial.**
- **Public awareness and education on substance abuse and caregiver burnout are needed.**
- **Technology should be leveraged responsibly to support, not hinder, cancer care.**
- **The American Psychological Association concept of “You can’t pour from an empty cup” emphasizes the importance of self-care, especially for psycho-oncologists and caregivers. Addressing the root cause of distress in patients and caregivers should be a priority to ensure comprehensive support.**

The panel discussion concluded with a strong emphasis on **hope, integrated care, and quality of life for both patients and caregivers.** The event successfully fostered awareness and dialogue on the **holistic aspects of cancer treatment**, reinforcing the need for a **patient-centric and multidisciplinary approach to oncology care.**



Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

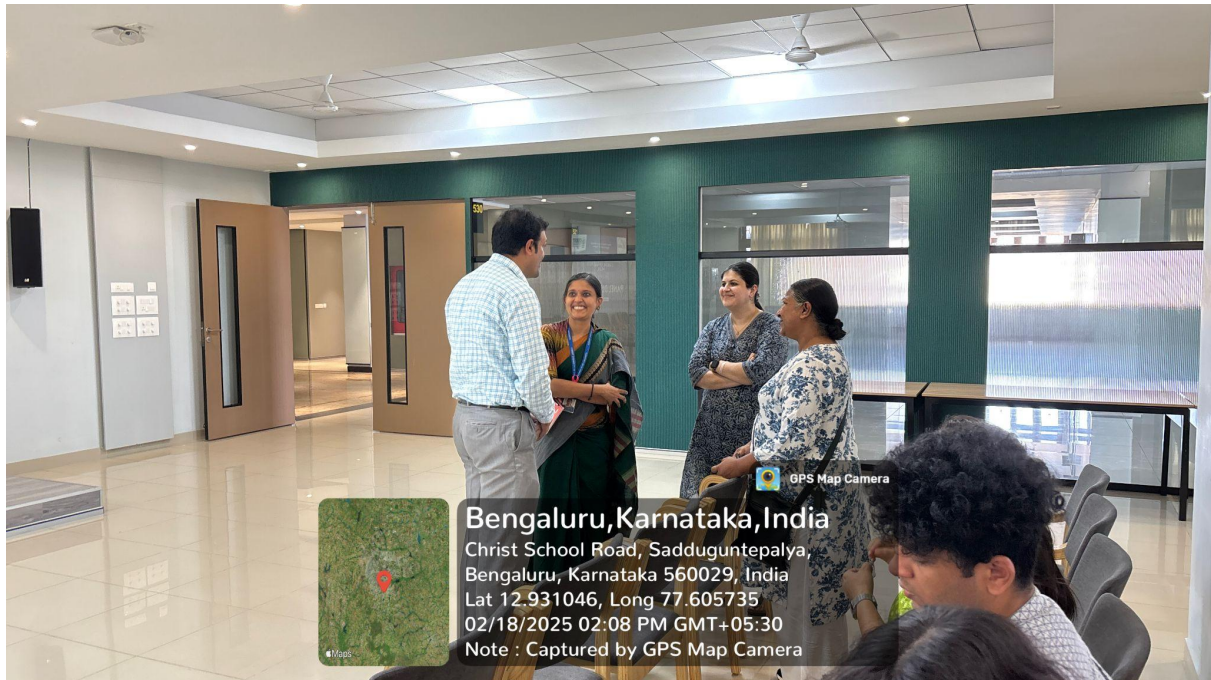
Christ School Road, Sadduguntepalya,
Bengaluru, Karnataka 560029, India
Lat 12.931056, Long 77.605717
02/18/2025 03:27 PM GMT+05:30
Note : Captured by GPS Map Camera



Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

2nd Cross Road, Sadduguntepalya, Bengaluru,
Karnataka 560029, India
Lat 12.934205, Long 77.606307
02/18/2025 12:30 PM GMT+05:30
Note : Captured by GPS Map Camera



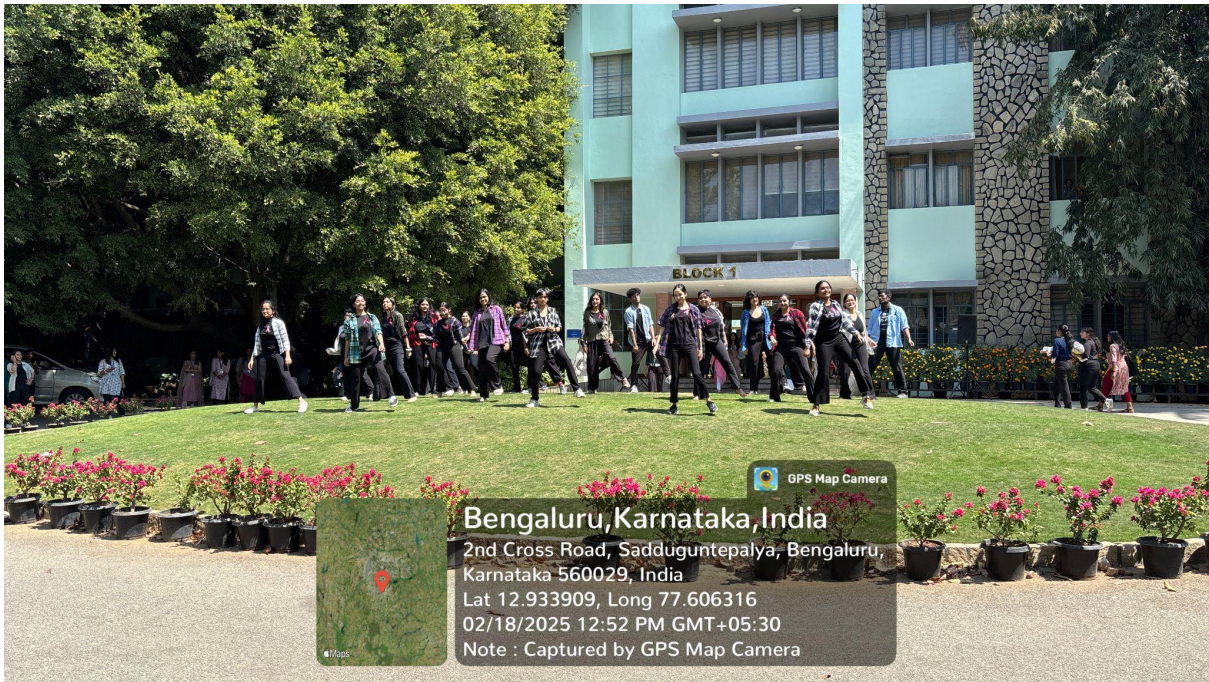
















Behind the scenes - Flash mob practice photos.



