



#HEALTH & FITNESS

WORLD CANCER DAY-2023

A Journey to “Close the Care Gap”

Cancer has been around for as long as we can remember and it is the biggest cause of death all around the world. To battle cancer and the fear it brings with the name, World Cancer Day is observed every year on the 4 February. Donning the colours of orange and blue as its theme, World Cancer Day urges people to band together and combat the illness via early identification, treatment, and spiritual support.

Started in 2000, it is a worldwide event that promotes awareness, prevention, detection, and treatment of cancer. There are more than 100 different types of cancer that plague humankind. And since cancer is a class of disease, the idea of ‘one cure’ seems a bit challenging. In addition to that, the word ‘cancer’ has an ominous tone to it. All of this can be quite overwhelming and World Cancer Day aims to battle everything that the disease brings.

One of the major issues that is prevalent in cancer treatment at the moment is that there is an obvious and conspicuous care gap. With the core belief that ‘Everyone deserves cancer care’ at its heart, there is a three-year campaign to draw attention.

As the official website says, “A multi-year campaign means more exposure and engagement, more opportunities to build

From motivating neighbours to provide transport to cancer treatment for a fellow resident to building a community with like-minded people or ensuring that healthy and affordable food options are offered at the local school; whatever it takes to close the gap.

global awareness and ultimately more impact.”

The World Cancer Day 2022-2024 theme is ‘Close the Care Gap.’ The focus in 2022 was ‘Realising the problem.’ This year, for World Cancer Day 2023, the theme is ‘Uniting our voices and taking action,’ which will be followed by, ‘2024: Together, we challenge those in power,’ thus concluding the three-year campaign.

It is crucial that we recognise this day and support it because the death toll of cancer victims is shockingly high. Statistics suggest that about 10 million people die of cancer annually. The most common cases of cancers include breast, lung, colon, rectum, and prostate cancers. According to WHO, around one-third of deaths from cancer can be blamed on tobacco use, high body mass index, alcohol consumption, low fruit and vegetable intake, and lack of physical activity.

But as this year’s theme promotes, ‘Uniting our voices and taking action’ is what we are still lacking. There is not enough noise because our voices are not united. And a bigger issue is that there is a significant lack of action. Even when people are seeing symptoms, there is a reluctance to go see the doctor for a check-up and of course, the issue is even more common amongst men. Cancer

induced by tobacco and breast cancer are two of the biggest threats at the moment yet the lack of action to even detect cancer is appalling.

Many types of cancer can be cured if they are detected early followed by effective treatment. In fact, 30-50 percent of cancers can currently be prevented by avoiding risk factors and implementing prevention strategies.

World Cancer Day raises awareness about all of this and focuses on eradicating misinformation and myths about the disease. From motivating neighbours to provide transport to cancer treatment for a fellow resident to building a community with like-minded people or ensuring that healthy and affordable food options are offered at the local school; whatever it takes to close the gap.

This 4 February, let us fly the colours. Let us take over social media with hashtags; make it a trending topic to create awareness. And most importantly, let us promise ourselves that we will know, we will unite our voices and we will be taking action.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Collected

