TATA MEMORIAL CENTRE

Office of the Director Academics

Observership Program in Onco-Pulmonology

Unit / Department	:	Department of Pulmonary Medicine, Thoracic Oncology Disease Management Group
Duration	:	1 Week to 6 Month
Eligibility	:	In final year / completed Postgraduate training in Pulmonary Medicine

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Introduction

- The International Agency for Research on Cancer GLOBOCAN project has predicted that India's cancer burden will nearly double in the next 20 years, from slightly more than a million new cases in 2012 to more than 1·7 million by 2035.
- Wilson et al estimate that the number of cancer cases necessitating first-line chemotherapy treatment in the world will increase by 53%, from 9.8 million in 2018 to 15 million in 2040.
- Sixty-seven percent of such patients will reside in low- or middle-income countries, with India having over 1.1 million new cases per year needing chemotherapy.

Eligibility:

- **International Applicants:** Those pursuing final year of, or have completed, postgraduate training in Pulmonary Medicine may apply. Acceptance for Observership is subject to availability and is at the discretion of Department of Pulmonary Medicine, TMC and subject to approval of Academics Section, TMC and from the National Medical Commission

- **National Applicants:** Those who **have completed** postgraduate training in Pulmonary Medicine (MD/DNB/DM) and qualified to practice as Pulmonologists in India may apply. Acceptance for Observership is subject to availability and is at the discretion of Department of Pulmonary Medicine, TMC and subject to approval from Academics Section, TMC.

Objective of this Observership:

- Pulmonary Oncology has traditionally been perceived, to be the screening, diagnosis, staging and wherever legally mandated, the treatment of Lung Cancer by pulmonologists, including treatment complications including Onco-Interventional Pulmonology.

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- However, from our experience of seeing more than 10,000 patients annually, referred to our Pulmonary Medicine Services in Tata Memorial Centre, a tertiary stand-alone Oncology Centre and perhaps the largest and oldest public Cancer Hospital in India, we believe there is a much broader role for a Pulmonologist in dealing with cancer. We see a niche role for an Onco- Pulmonologist, not only screening, diagnosis or staging lung cancer, but additionally also working together in a MDT with the oncologists, across all cancer disease sites, disease management groups and oncology treatment specialities, encompassing not only clinical pulmonology inputs to oncologists but also encompassing Onco Interventional Pulmonology procedures and primary palliative care.

- The spiraling cancer burden globally will lead to a large number of patients requiring pulmonologists to deal with the pulmonary issues due to the chemotherapy toxicities and infections due to immune suppression apart from the numerous pulmonary toxicities due to radiation pneumonitis, immunotherapy, radiation recall pneumonitis and newer emerging therapies like CAR T cell therapy.

- Also, cancer patients often have breathing problems or develop pulmonary lesions due to metastases, infections, complications of cancer therapy, coexisting respiratory diseases for which the oncologist may want a pulmonologist input.

- There are often diagnosis and cancer treatment/respiratory treatment dilemmas in cancer patients with respiratory comorbidities especially related to deciding treatment, drug interactions, side effects of cancer therapies, fitness for surgeries etc with prognosis of the cancer and the respiratory comorbidity being essential knowledge for the patient's optimum decisions on cancer therapy as well as for optimizing the respiratory comorbidities which could affect tolerance to cancer therapies.

- Diseases like Interstitial Lung Disease and COPD are known to be associated with development of lung cancer thus affecting treatment and prognosis of both diseases. TB is rampant in India and LMIC, either coexistent with cancer or consequent to cancer therapy and could affect cancer treatment decisions or delay definitive cancer therapy or require modification of cancer therapy dosages due to interaction with AKT and sub therapeutic drug levels.

- Many of the dedicated oncology institutions and regional cancer centers do not have inbuilt specialist pulmonology services to address these multiple respiratory issues in these patients or lack clinical workload exposure and even awareness of the broad scope of Onco- Pulmonology.

- With the large number of oncology centers being planned across India and the need of the hour of a multi-disciplinary team approach to cancer care with functioning of pulmonologists and oncologists in synergy, it is necessary not only to educate the pulmonologist on their role in an oncology setup

but also to increase the awareness across all oncology specialities regarding the pulmonologist's contribution in management of the cancer patient.

- Thus, we aim to provide a structured observership programme to pulmonologists across the globe, to enable them to manage pulmonary diseases, complications, co-morbidities and toxicities prevalent in the cancer patient cohort across all types of cancer sites, across all cancer treatment specialities as well as exposing them to MDT style functioning.

- Additionally, wherever desired, we also provide tailor-made Observership and simulation based training in specific procedures relevant to Onco-Interventional Pulmonology, especially basic bronchoscopy, diagnostic EBUS, Lung Cancer Staging EBUS, Radial EBUS, Thoracic Ultrasound depending on the need, the applicant's own competence and experience and requirements and more importantly the duration of the Observership in Onco-Pulmonology planned at our Institution, ranging from a minimum of 2 weeks and varying upto 4 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 1 year.

- We also have the option of Indian Pulmonology trainees applying for our 2 year Homi Bhabha National Institute (HBNI) Fellowship in Onco-Pulmonology, which is a highly competitive training programme in Onco-Pulmonology.

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Assessments	:	Intra-Departmental.
Completion Certificate	:	Will be issued upon successful completion of tenure.

Contacts

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