NCG
News Letter

NATIONAL CANCER GRID

COLLABORATION FOR CANCER CARE

Activities

- NCG - Koita Centre for Digital Oncology – NCG established this Centre for digital oncology to promote use of digital technologies and tools to improve cancer care across India. More details are available at https://tmc.gov.in/ncg/index.php/overview/ncg-koita

- NCG - Clinical Trial Network – has been initiated in association with Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, (BIRAC), in November 2020, with the purpose to strengthen the clinical trial capacity across member centres to promote multi-centric high-quality trials. The network will provide a uniform platform to support innovation and development of biosimilars. The network has 11 centres with Tata Memorial Centre being the coordinating centre. . More details are available at https://tmc.gov.in/ncg/index.php/research/bsnc

Message from NCG

Dear Members,
Welcome back to the another issue of NCG Newsletter. We hope you are enjoying looking at the updates from NCG. The past issue gave an in-depth information about EQAS program and how to participate. We received many queries on VTB of NCG especially form new centres. Hence, this issue gives you an insight in to the details of the Virtual Tumor Board activities of NCG. It provides all information about the VTB schedule, presentations and how to participate. We hope this will answer all queries on participation, and help all to get connected for VTB.

NEW MEMBERS

National

- Aaruni Hospital, Rajkot, Gujarat
- Amrita Institute of Medical Science and Research Centre, Faridabad, Haryana
- Aster International Institute of Oncology, Aster CMI, Bangalore
- Jan Swasthya Sahayog, (Peoples Health Support Group), Bilaspur, Chattisgarh

- Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College (KLE academy of Higher Education & Research), Belagavi, Karnataka
- Jeet Association for Support to Cancer Patients (JASCAP), Mumbai, Maharashtra
- LHDM & Dr Prem Hospital Pvt. Ltd., Panipat

Virtual Tumor Board activity

ABOUT NATIONAL CANCER GRID'S VIRTUAL TUMOUR BOARDS AT TATA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA

BACKGROUND

Virtual Tumour Board (VTB) an initiative of NCG, aims at providing standardized cancer care to the patients across the country. Various centers from across India, that are a part of NCG join this Virtual Tumour Board to discuss management of Oncology cases over a zoom platform provided to NCG by ECHO India. Participants from across the 280 centers of NCG can present their cases in these sessions. Subject experts discuss the optimal treatment for the cases presented by the participants... The participants have to submit their cases in a predefined template on weekly basis to the coordinator appointed by ECHO India who works in collaboration with NCG experts. In addition, the short teaching sessions on any topic of interest are conducted. Currently VTB sessions are being conducted twice a week which include the two sessions organized every Saturday by Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai and one session organized by Max Hospital, Saket, Delhi for various cancer subsites. In addition to the above mentioned VTBs, an additional Head & Neck VTB is scheduled on every third Saturday of each month in the evening time from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The fellows of Head & Neck oncology from various institutes present their cases in this VTB. The average attendance of the fellows for this VTB is about 25 participants per session.

ROLE OF ECHO INDIA IN NCG VTB SESSIONS

ECHO India is a non-profit organization working towards building capacities across areas such as healthcare, education and other sustainable development goals through its ECHO model. This model is built on four pillars that include amplification, sharing of best practices, enabling case-based learning and monitoring to continually evaluate and improve approaches.

ECHO India has collaborated with NCG to conduct VTB sessions by providing NCG all the technical and monitoring support in terms of establishing ECHO hub at the host site, providing zoom platform to conduct sessions in video conferencing mode and monitoring the sessions to maintain the quality mandated by ECHO model.

Till September 2022, participants used to submit their case presentations on weekly basis to a coordinator appointed by ECHO India. The sessions were being conducted over a zoom platform provided by ECHO India. From October 2022, all the VTBs are shifted to newly developed iECHO platform of ECHO India.

The official launch took place at Tata Memorial Hospital in the esteemed presence of Dr. Pramesh CS, Director, Tata Memorial Hospital and Convener of National Cancer Grid and other senior members of NCG including the conveners of all the Disease Management Groups (DMGs).

Dr. Pramesh delivered a key-note address during this official launch of VTB programs on iECHO in which he covered the journey of Virtual Tumour Boards from its inception in 2016 to till date. He also mentioned the benefits of integrating the VTBs in iECHO platform.

PRECIS OF DR. PRAMESH'S KEY NOTE ADDRESS DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF VTBS ON IECHO

"Virtual Tumour Board (VTB) was conceptualized in 2016 to provide high quality, multi-disciplinary team decision making across the country and across the National Cancer Grid (NCG Centers). To be honest we did not anticipate the scale and the scope of how it will progress, but I am extremely happy to share that not only the complicated cases and clinical situations being discussed, but main aim of this platform is now shifted to continuing medical education amongst all the NCG member centers. It is a very welcome added advantage of this platform. With hundreds of Virtual Tumour Boards already been conducted which saw a participation of thousands of participants from across the NCG centers, it is a testimony to the fact that incepted in 2016, we have been able to continue it for 6 long years without an interruption. Now, it is the time for us to evolve and see in what way we can further improve the quality and the value that these Virtual Tumour Boards bring to the participants and also to encourage breadth and width of participation from many of the NCG Centers which may not be currently participating actively. With today's launch of Virtual Tumour Boards on iECHO platform will make several functionalities of VTBs more streamlined and enable to get a lot more data matrix out of it. This platform will also make the scheduling of the VTBs more streamlined."

Dr. Pramesh CS, Director, Tata Memorial Hospital & Convener of National Cancer Grid

10 cancer-site wise Disease Management Groups (DMGs) at TMH that include surgical oncologists, medical oncologists, pathologists, radiation oncologists etc. The case presentations shared by the spokes are reviewed by the DMGs and then the spokes are invited to present their cases in VTBs. These 10 cancer-site wise VTBs (as mentioned below) are now developed into 10 exclusive programs as mentioned in table 2.

Each cancer site has a pool of around 1,000 to 1,400 potential spoke participants from across the 283 NCG centers in India. The average attendance in each VTB is about 25 participants. The details of number of cancer site -wise DMG members and spoke participants from across NCG centers are as follows:
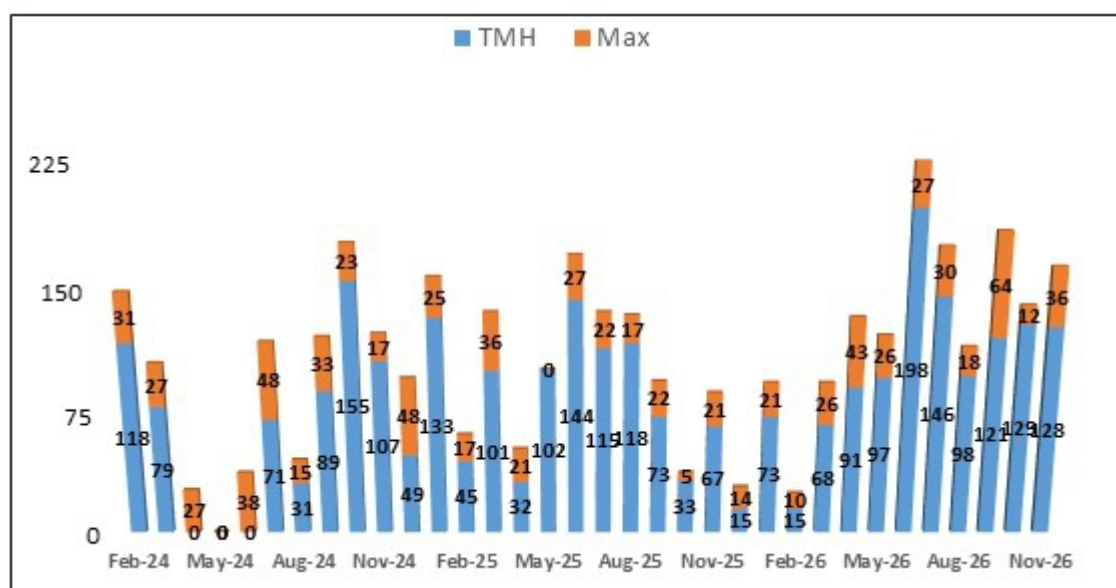
SR. No.	Cancer Site	No. of DMG members	No. of Participants from NCG Centers
1	Adult Hematolymphoid	44	1,019
2	Bone & Soft tissue	37	1,162
3	Breast	29	1,297
4	Gastrointestinal	56	1,299
5	Gynaecology	30	1,281
6	Head & Neck	30	1,392
7	Neuro oncology	30	1,091
8	Pediatric Soft Tumours & Hematolymphoid	30	1,379
9	Thoracic	32	1,206
10	Urology	18	962
Table 1: Disease Management Groups (DMGs) and Count of total Participants enrolled for each VTB			

SUMMARY OF VIRTUAL TUMOUR BOARDS: 2020-2022

Virtual Tumour Boards (VTBs) have been quite instrumental in engaging medical oncologists, surgical oncologists, radiation oncologists, paediatric oncologists, pathologists, surgeons, gynaecologists and palliative care specialists across India to discuss the cases reported at their centres for effective management of the cases and early referrals of the complicated cases for the advanced care.

Following graph summarizes the outreach of Virtual Tumour Boards (VTBs) in last two years i.e., from 2020 to 2022 in terms of the participation (spokes), centres (spoke sites) and cases presented in each cancer-site wise VTB.

Graph 1: Monthly Spoke count in VTB (February 2020-November 2022)

TRENDS IN CASE PRESENTATIONS DURING VIRTUAL TUMOUR BOARDS (FEBRUARY 2020-NOVEMBER 2022)

CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD

The experience of 6 years of Virtual Tumour Boards in collaboration with ECHO India shows that it is proving to be a good learning platform which is enabling the NCG member centres and its members to get expert recommendations for managing the challenging, complicated cancer cases. The early interventions through the recommendations received from the experts will enable the centers to give timely and quality care to as many cancer patients as possible, thus reducing the cancer associated morbidities and mortalities in India.

HOW TO JOIN NCG VTB PROGRAMS ON iECHO

Virtual Tumour Boards on Saturdays are hosted by Tata Memorial Hospital. Currently there are 10 cancer-site wise Disease Management groups (as mentioned in Table 2) that are conducting 10 exclusive VTB programs (as mentioned in Table 1).

In order to get registered as a member of National Cancer Grid, please refer to the website by opening this link: https://tmc.gov.in/ncg/index.php/ncg-members/become-a-ncg-member

Once your centre is added to National Cancer Grid, please contact Dr. Abhiram Mehendale from ECHO India who coordinates for Virtual Tumour Boards and share details of the members who would like to attend the VTBs including their names, designations, specialities and VTBs they would like to attend. Please share the information via email on abhiram.mehendale@echoindia.in.

After verification with concerned NCG authorities, all the listed members from your center will be sent an invitation email to join VTB program through ECHO India's iECHO platform (www.iecho.org). On successful registration on iECHO, the participants are all set to join VTBs and they will receive the session links 30 minutes prior to each session on every Saturday. The enrolled participants will receive only those VTB program links for which they are registered as per their choice. Please refer to Table 1 to check which VTB programs are currently being conducted over iECHO platform and select your preference while sharing the details with Dr. Abhiram Mehendale.

For more queries and clarifications on registration process for VTBs, please contact Dr. Abhiram Mehendale on +91 9029885185.

APPEAL

·   Write to us for a special webinar on how to search and / use databases and resources

·   Do contribute to the column - "News from Members". Share activities related to NCG mandate at your centre, and /or announcements of upcoming events, achievements of centres, and similar matters. We will be pleased to publish these in our next issue of e-newsletter.

·   Please share the static IP addresses / changes / updates for your centre with – joshi.mva@gmail.com

·   Visit the list of centres on NCG website and verify your institutional details and revert for any changes / corrections to joshi.mva@gmail.com

·   We request all the members to submit/update all membership Annexures (I, II, III) and forward these to - ncg@tmc.gov.in.

    Annexures are available at https://tmc.gov.in/ncg/index.php/ncg-members/become-a-ncg-member