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The National Cancer Grid (NCG), a network of major cancer centres and research institutes, has now covered 108 cancer treatment hospitals and institutes in the country.

With this, the NCG, which was launched in 2012, has now covered 60 per cent of the cancer centres and research institutes in the country.

This was informed by the Tata Trusts in its official statement issued today.

"The NCG held its seventh meeting on May 20 and 21 at the Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, with over 150 participants from 108 centres across the country," it said.

The NCG's primary mandate is uniform standards of cancer care across India by adopting evidence-based management guidelines, which are implemented across these centres. It is also intended to facilitate the exchange of expertise between centres and create a ready network for collaborative research in cancer, the statement added.

The Tata Memorial Centre supports and largely guides the NCG, a facility where evidence-based cancer cases are discussed through video conference, in which several doctors and experts from cancer treatment hospitals and institutes across the country take part.

"The Tata Trusts will be facilitating a high bandwidth, secure and private network through which, the cancer care centres around the country can interact directly with other centres, thus enabling inter-centre knowledge sharing and providing access to multiple solutions like Virtual Tumor Board, Digital Nerve Centre among others," the statement said.

The Virtual Tumour Board was launched on January 29 in Mumbai, where Union Health Minister J P Nadda was present.

A Tata Memorial official said that earlier the VTB used to be working only on certain days of a week as per the convenience of the doctors and patients' cases. With more and more cancer hospitals and institutes joining the VTB, its sessions and participation period is expanding.

Dr R A Badwe, Director of the Tata Memorial Centre said, "The NCG has made some significant strides this year.

The potential of using this network is endless when it comes to standardisation of quality of care and initiating research.

The guidelines for standards of care now need to define a minimum, optimum and optional level, which will enable decisions based on the 'value' of an intervention."