



## **INCTR PALLIATIVE ACCESS (PAX) PROGRAM**

### International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (INCTR)

The International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (INCTR) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation founded in 1998 by the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and the Institut Pasteur in Brussels. Its goals are to assist developing countries through a structured program of research collaboration, education and training, to develop an increased understanding of the causes and predisposition to regionally important cancers, and to increase survival rates and quality of life for patients with cancer. To this end, INCTR has developed international networks and partnerships with corporate, professional, academic, governmental and non-governmental organisations to establish a structured programme of research collaboration, education and training. The United States National Cancer Institute has provided considerable financial and technical support to INCTR since its inception. More information about the organisation and their current research projects may be found on their website, [www.inctr.org](http://www.inctr.org).

### INCTR Palliative Access (PAX) Program

The INCTR Palliative Access (PAX) Program was established in 2002 to decrease the global suffering caused by cancer through improving access to palliative care services in developing countries. There is an urgent humanitarian need for good cancer palliative care worldwide, particularly among disadvantaged populations where patients usually present at an advanced stage when there is little possibility of a cure. Using INCTR's networks and contacts, PAX personnel have collaborated with local groups to establish regional palliative care centers in India and Nepal. Newer initiatives are underway in Brazil, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua and Yemen. These centers provide specialist palliative care for adults and children with advanced cancer through a combination of inpatient, outpatient and home/community-based services. In addition, they have become centers for research and teaching, as well as the promotion of improved opioid availability and changes in public health policy to improve palliative care for the population.

PAX also works with other cancer control groups, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (IAEA/PACT), to provide a consulting service to national and regional governments on developing palliative care capacity.

PAX has published a pocket-sized palliative care handbook aimed at non-specialized medical staff, for instance oncologists, who care for patients with advanced disease. This has been a collaborative effort between healthcare professionals in both developed and resource-limited countries. The handbook is now in its second edition. Future plans include publishing an electronic version to the web and ongoing revision in preparation for a third edition.

# India

## Significant achievements since 2006

### **Mehdi Nawaz Jung Institute of Oncology and Regional Cancer Centre (MNJ), Hyderabad**

- 2006 began collaborative project with American Cancer Society (ACS) and Pallium India to establish palliative care service. Growing rapidly. Outpatient clinic and consultation service treated 7994 patients in 2008.
- 2007 launched specialized pediatric palliative care program. 130 children treated in 2008.
- 2008 developed home-based palliative care program for cancer patients in Hyderabad
- 2008 initiated collaboration with Catholic Hospital Association of India (CHAI), one of main HIV/AIDS groups in Andhra Pradesh
- 2008 undertook community-based palliative care needs assessment. Result: approx 9% of general population need palliative care and/or chronic pain service
  
- Education program offered for health professionals and volunteers from Andhra Pradesh and other Indian states. 589 participants in 2008. Senior oncologist who completed course of training at MNJ started palliative care program in Chitranjan Cancer Hospital, Calcutta.
- Partnership established with British Columbia Cancer Agency (BCCA) for further educational assistance and support
  
- Law amended to allow government institutions with palliative care centers to apply to drug controller for single license and quota so can buy opioids direct from manufacturer
- Increase in opioid consumption from 1050 grams in 2004 to 5260 grams in 2007
  
- Inclusion of palliative care in state-sponsored Health Insurance Scheme for people below poverty line
- MNJ awarded grant by Govt. of India and WHO-India Office to develop manual on setting up palliative care services, and opioid availability

## Future plans

- Expansion of all elements of hospital-based care at MNJ
- Development of new palliative care program in Poona
- Establish link centers at Nellore and Guntur for patients in outlying areas to collect medications and receive follow-up care
- Collaboration with St Jude Hospital, Memphis, TN to expand pediatric program
- Growth of home-based service to include patients with chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS
- Research project to validate translations of ESAS and PPS in Hindi, Urdu and Telegu
  
- Hold more sensitization programs to spread awareness among professionals and volunteers within and outside Andhra Pradesh.
- Provide more intensive specialized training for health professionals from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka already practicing palliative care

# Nepal

## Significant achievements over last 8 years

### **Bhaktapur Cancer Centre**

- Establishment of 10-bed palliative care unit and outpatient clinic; 590 inpatients and 1245 outpatients treated in last five years
- Twinned with Mid-Island Hospice of British Columbia, Canada
- Visiting fellow from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York

### **Kanti Children's Hospital, Kathmandu**

- Children's palliative care service associated with the oncology unit; 2 physicians and team providing pain and symptom management to outpatient and dedicated 2-3 palliative care beds on the unit

### **Hospice Nepal, Patan**

- Free standing hospice with beds and a home hospice program; 339 patients cared for in 3 years since started
- Vehicle donated by INCTR.

### **BP Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital (BPCCKMCH), Bharatpur**

- Palliative care unit with 10 beds, outpatient clinic and consultation service
- 2008 visiting resident from Canada
- Twinned with Victoria Hospice Society

### **Scheer Memorial Hospital, Banepa**

- Palliative care began in 2003 and is ongoing although no dedicated beds

- Courses for students at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) and Bir Hospital
- Sensitization programs for health professionals, administrators and general public in association with Nepal Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (NNCTR)
- Physician from BPCCKMCH trained in India; nurse studying for masters degree in UK

- Oral morphine available since the fall of 2005
- Improved access to morphine (both oral and parenteral)
- Morphine now being produced in Nepal

- Advocating with government to make palliative care part of the national health system of the country

## Future plans

- Identify and train "physician champion"
- Establish palliative care at Kanti and new TUTH cancer hospital, possibly sharing single physician supporting two consulting teams
- Develop psychosocial service at BPCCKMCH
- Find "twinning" organization for children's palliative care program at Kanti
- Recruit more overseas visiting fellows and registrars
- More training and more staff for home hospice program; at present only able to visit patients once a week
- Establish fund to help poorest patients and families with transport, food, medications, etc.

- Develop training programs for nurses, medical assistants, physicians, public health workers, etc. at Nepal Institute of Health Sciences/Stupa Hospital
- Send Dr. Kailash (Assistant Medical Director, Kanti) for fellowship training in India or western country
- Continue sensitization program

- Include palliative care as an integral component of TUTH cancer hospital program development

## Brazil

### Progress to date

- Since December 2007 ongoing discussions and planning with **Santa Marcelina Hospital, Sao Paulo**

### Future plans

- Develop a palliative care team (for adults) at Santa Marcelina Hospital
- Develop home-based palliative care program within Santa Marcelina Primary Health Care System (cares for around 4 million people of low socio-economic status in Eastern Sao Paulo)
- Develop a children's palliative care program at Santa Marcelina Hospital/TOCA
- Interact with additional palliative care groups in Brazil, NCI and other international cancer control advisors

## Sri Lanka

### Progress to date

- Needs assessment with IAEA/PACT and drawing up of plan for model palliative care program in Colombo.
- Preliminary organization of educational initiatives under auspices of PAX India Program

### Future plans

- Train physicians and nurses in Hyderabad
- Visit by PAX team to advise on development of consulting program at cancer hospital in Colombo and nearby hospice
- Ongoing mentorship
- Continue collaboration with IAEA/PACT to ensure population coverage as part of comprehensive cancer control program

## Nicaragua

### Progress to date

- Collaborated with International Atomic Energy Agency Program Action for Cancer Therapy (IAEA/PACT) on missions to assess needs and advise government on ways to improve access to palliative care as part of cancer control programs

### Future plans

- Ongoing discussions with regional leaders on how best to initiate palliative care programs

## Yemen

### Progress to date

- Participated in IAEA/PACT missions and initial planning for educational initiatives with PAX India

### Future plans

- Train physicians and nurses in Hyderabad
- Visit by PAX team to advise on development of consulting program at cancer hospital in Sana'a and nearby hospice
- Ongoing mentorship
- Continue collaboration with IAEA/PACT to ensure population coverage as part of comprehensive cancer control program