

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION**

Press Release

GMCH to start Brachytherapy Treatment for Eye Cancer

Chandigarh, 7th July, 2017: Eye cancer treatment and brachytherapy facility was inaugurated in GMCH, Sector 32, today by Hon'ble Smt. Kirron Kher, Member of Parliament. Sh. Anurag Agarwal, IAS, Home Secretary-cum-Secretary Medical Education and Research was the Guest of Honour. Prof. Ashok Kumar Janmeja, Director Principal, Sh. Satish Kumar Jain, Additional Director (Admn.), Prof. Ravi Kumar Gupta, Medical Superintendent and Head of various Departments of GMCH were present during the inauguration .

Smt. Kirron Kher and Sh. Anurag Agarwal, IAS visited the Brachytherapy complex. Prof. Janmeja, Director Principal, GMCH briefed Smt. Kirron Kher about the project. Dr Subina Narang demonstrated the implanting the iodine seeds (brachytherapy or localized radiation) on eye cancer model. Smt. Kirron Kher expressed her pleasure to have this kind of exclusive facility in GMCH, Chandigarh only after AIIMS, Delhi in government sector in India. Sh. Anurag Agarwal, IAS expressed keen interest in this project and assured continued support from Chandigarh administration.

Prof. Sudesh Arya, Head Department of Ophthalmology informed that the most common eye cancers are retinoblastoma affecting young children of 2-5 years and ocular melanoma affecting the older age group. The presentation of these cancers can be varied as white reflex or cat's eye reflex, eye swelling, squint or eye ball protrusion, decreased vision, small blackish nodules, glaucoma, retinal detachment, etc. In India the problem is delayed presentation and limited treatment facilities. The reported incidence of retinoblastoma in India is 1 in 15000 to 18000 live births but it is thought to be under-reported. As per 2011 census, if GMCH caters to the population of Chandigarh, Punjab,

Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, the estimated beneficiaries would be more than 1000 patients each year.

With appropriate and timely treatment, even large tumors can achieve good vision. The primary focus in eye cancer treatment has been to save the life of the patient. Due lack of facilities, the treatment offered by most of the centers in North India is removal of the eye to save the life of the patient. The concept of availability of eye cancer treatment was initiated by Prof. Sunandan Sood when Dr Subina Narang was sent to acquire training for the same from Wills Eye Institute, Philadelphia USA. With the constant efforts of Chandigarh administration the project could see the light of the day.

GMCH would be the first center in North of Delhi to offer brachytherapy for eye cancer treatment which is a minimally invasive treatment. This is the second government center after AIIMS, New Delhi to offer brachytherapy facility to eye cancer patients. Eye cancer treatment planning and execution requires the team work of Ophthalmologist, Oncologist, Radiotherapist, Radiologist and Pathologist.

Prof. Suman Kochhar(Radiologist), Prof. A.K. Pandey (Radiotherapist), Dr. Divya (Radiotherapist) and Dr Upasana (Radiologist) and Ms. Gurbir (Radiation Physicist) have received online treatment planning and the placement of Iodine 125 seeds in gold plaque. The treatment is planned depending upon the size and location of the tumor. The gold plaque bearing radioactive I125 seeds is sutured over the white of the eye corresponding to the tumor site to deliver localised radiation. The patient is kept in isolation for 2-3 days depending on the dose required. After this the plaque is removed.

Another mode of treatment, available at selected centers is endovascular delivery of chemotherapeutic agent. However, this is an expensive and invasive treatment for eye tumors.

GMCH is equipped with all facilities for diagnosis and treatment of a patient with eye cancer. The institute aims at providing comprehensive care to eye cancer patients to improve their vision and quality of life.