

How Ayurveda can help in post surgery Cancer care

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Acceptance is the first step towards recovering from a dis- Living in denial can diminish the chances for any kind of progress, especially in the case of cancer. But denial is the first reaction of a patient. As Sangeeta Upadhyay*, 39, says, “When my doctor told me the

biopsy result, I couldn't believe him. I had no family history of any disease, let alone cancer, and led an active life.

How could I get the dreaded C?" This is perhaps why the theme for World Cancer Day this year is I AM AND I WILL, which means it is the patient who is the ultimate warrior against the disease. "We have to take ownership of what we have. Acceptance is the key, as only after it can one make the resolution that 'I will beat it'. In India, there is a lot of denial when it comes to cancer.

In the West, the entire prognosis is discussed with patients, but here we do so with the attendants. This has to change," says Dr Chandragouda Dodagoudar, Director, Medical Oncology, Akash Healthcare & Super Specialty Hospitals, Dwarka. "An individual's mutiny against the disease takes one halfway through it," adds Dr Amod Manocha, Head, Pain Management Services, Max Super Specialty Hospital, Saket.

Once a patient accepts the condition he is in, it empowers him to take decisions that can help him live his life fully and make the best use of the time he has. Practices like yoga and pranayama help a patient come to terms with his condition with a calm mind, which is important for treading the difficult road ahead as also for bouncing back to good health. In fact, Mumbai's Tata Memorial Hospital recently collaborated with the Ministry of Ayush to quantify the treatment outcomes of cancer patients using Ayurveda and yoga. Something which the proponents of yoga and Ayurveda have been vouching for since long.

Ayurveda: curative and supportive

"Cancer treatment in Ayurveda doesn't just focus on the area of the malignancy, but on the entire system, as the whole organism is to be returned to harmony for the disease to be treated permanently,

and prevent its recurrence. The body must be purified of toxins that cause the cells to attack the body," says Ayurvedacharya Dr Partap Chauhan, Director, Jiva Ayurveda.

Dr Chauhan says apart from detoxifying diets, cancer patients are also advised herbs (amla, garlic, ashwagadha, turmeric, ginger and tulsi) that cleanse blood and increase immunity. A calm and relaxed mind is crucial in treating cancer. "Ayurveda's panchkarma process cleanses the body by eliminating toxins and then rejuvenates it through rasayanas," says Dr Chauhan, adding that Ayurvedic preparations help in post-surgery care, and act as a co-therapy along with chemotherapy or radiotherapy.



AMIT BANDRE

Yoga and meditation

Himalayan Siddha Grand Master Akshar, an internationally acclaimed Yoga Master, says that a number of yogasanas like Marjariasana (cat/cow pose), Shalabasana (locust pose), Vasisthasana, Paschimottanasana and Halasana help energise cancer patients. “Further, yogasanas like Surya Namaskar (done with awareness on breath) and Himalaya Pranam (done slowly, and in a gentle manner) help even the Stage III cancer patients,” he says.

Even allopathic doctors, like Dr Dodagoudar, agree: “Yoga releases stress that is a big contributor in cancer. That’s why, I advise yogic exercises to my patients, except when they have had surgeries.” Says Dr Manocha: “A reasonable control over pain can be achieved by using a combination of methods, including multimodal, multidisciplinary approach.

Pain control in cancer is not just about medications or injections, concomitant factors such as mood and anxiety can significantly magnify the perceived pain and hence addressing them is important. Relaxation therapies such as meditation, mindfulness may help in coping with feelings and producing a calming effect.” Akshar adds, “Those undergoing chemotherapy should practice Ujjayi Pranayam daily. It helps to eliminate stress and anxiety, corrects the disturbed sleep cycle and fills patients with positivity, all of which aids in recovery.”