

ONCOLOGY – AN OVERVIEW**

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Cancer a malignant tumor is not such a disease as with single etiology, definite identifiable clinical features and established planned management with definite outcome. The etiology is diverse, some of which are known and many others are yet to be revealed. The clinical features may mimic benign tumors, metabolic and other disorders. The cancer risk has been found to be predominantly related to environmental factors which is about 65%. Heritable factors contribute about 26% to 42%. The tumor may remain localised for some period. But the most critical problem regarding character of cancer is its mode of unpredictable and uncertain spread (Metastasis) to distant places which may be revealed or occult and solitary or at multiple sites anywhere in the body. The spread is commonly by lymph or blood. Metastasis is the prime hindrance to assess the disease status. All these factors create unrest in the mind of clinician regarding plan of management and to foresee the outcome of treatment, and prognosis. The most hopeful part is that cancer risk from environmental factors is about 65% and that this risk can be drastically reduced adopting related preventive measures viz. change in food habit, life style, vulnerable occupations; total abstinence from addictions like smoking or smokeless tobacco use, alcohol; identification of heritable factors, high risk group and preneoplastic conditions. Now a days cancer is not out of reach. Many can be prevented, some can be cured and others can be provided better life style or at least a peaceful ultimate.
