

'To cut oral cancer, curb tobacco lobby'

That can happen only through strong political will, says Dr Jatin Shah, renowned ENT-otolaryngologist, who is in city to train doctors from across the country

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The only way to prevent rise in number of head and neck (H&N) cancer cases in India, considered the capital of this type of cancer, is to ensure strict execution of laws, awareness in both urban and rural areas and education from school level, feels otolaryngologist Dr Jatin Shah, popularly referred to as the father of H&N oncology in medical fraternity.

Currently based in New York, Dr Shah, Elliott W Strong chair in Head and Neck (H&N) oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) for 23 years, has been invited to the city to give hands-on training to surgeons, ENT surgeons, dental surgeons to tackle the menace of oral cancer in the country.

"India needs an iron hand to curb the tobacco lobby. That can lead to reduction in cancer cases here," said Dr Shah, adding, "Laws are created with good intentions but their implementation is the responsibility of the government." According to him, political will alone can abolish the tobacco lobby in the country.

He opined that government should aggressively pursue free health camps and screening followed by awareness programmes with the help of social workers and NGOs to stop spread of oral cancer.

"The medical fraternity's role is as important as that of the government. Regular training and education abo-



Dr Jatin Shah

ut the advancements can help doctors spread the message faster," he said.

Emphasising on the urgency for oncologists in India, he pointed out that currently there is only one doctor available for every 2,000 registered cancer cases in the country.

The doctor

Dr Shah was born in Visnagar of Mehsana district and studied at Vadodara. He completed his medical studies from MS University. He has already made over 1,500 scientific presentations worldwide, trained about 3,000 doctors across the world, published more than 550 peer-reviewed articles and 12 medical textbooks.

Workshop on improving patients' lives

The fourth edition of Oncosurgery Master-course will be held on July 7-8 in the city. The theme this year is 'Oral Oncology'.



Dr Kaustubh Patel

Renowned faculties from across the world will share their experiences in treating various H&N cancers. More than 500 surgeons, pathologists and radiologists from across the country will attend the two-day conference.

Dr Kaustubh Patel, oncologist and course director of the conference, said, "The focus will be on micro-vascular reconstruction surgery with hands-on training to doctors. With advancement in medicine and techniques, it is possible to give a dignified life to a patient of mouth cancer or any other H&N cancer."

The doctors will be given training in pre and post cancer treatment which will include pain management, lifestyle management and psychological consulting.