



## The Way Forward

The report on cancer profile and related health indicators in India's Northeast Region provides a useful insight into the current cancer scenario and a roadmap to evaluate ongoing measures and plan for newer strategies for cancer control. The need of the hour is to strengthen health systems and cancer research in the region.

The following recommendations are categorized as (a) Strengthening of health systems (b) Measures for cancer prevention and control.

### (a) Strengthening of health systems

- Political will to increase public health expenditure, expand availability of cancer care services and health financing schemes.
- Capacity building of health care providers through regular training, re-training and skill enhancement for cancer care.
- Adopt and promote health technology for prevention and treatment such as use of digital tools for early detection and telemedicine for improved access to care.

### (b) Measures for cancer prevention and control

- Implementation and scaling up of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) activities: Tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. Such activities could be regional and culturally specific, making use of locally acceptable channels of communication.
- Periodic surveillance of behavioural and metabolic risk factors to measure the baseline prevalence and monitor change trends through regular surveys would be useful for tracking the impact of preventive measures.
- Strengthening of community-based tobacco and alcohol cessation services.
- Integrate cancer prevention with primary care and geriatric care by counselling for a healthy lifestyle.
- Scaling up and enhancing the availability and utilization of cancer screening and early detection services in the region.
- Facilitate early diagnosis by health education on warning signs and symptoms and train health care providers to recognize the same.
- Measures to ensure continuum of care.
- Better implementation of regional and state based cancer insurance programmes to improve accessibility and affordability of cancer care.
- Strengthening the medical certification of cause of death for availability of accurate and complete cancer mortality.
- Expansion of tertiary cancer care services
- Formulate follow up care programmes for cancer survivors to improve quality of life
- Implementation and promotion of community based palliative care.
- A prioritized cancer research agenda to address local and regional needs.