BioSpectrum
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

WHO spells out need to step up cancer services

05 February 2020 | News

WHO highlights a wide range of proven interventions to prevent new cancer cases



The World Health Organization (WHO) spells out the need to step up cancer services in low and middle-income countries. WHO warns that, if current trends continue, the world will see a 60% increase in cancer cases over the next two decades. The greatest increase (an estimated 81%) in new cases will occur in low- and middle-income countries, where survival rates are currently lowest.

This is largely because these countries have had to focus limited health resources on combating infectious diseases and improving maternal and child health, while health services are not equipped to prevent, diagnose and treat cancers. In 2019, more than 90% of high-income countries reported that comprehensive treatment services for cancer were available in the public health system compared to less than 15% of low-income countries.

“This is a wake-up call to all of us to tackle the unacceptable inequalities between cancer services in rich and poor countries,” says Dr Ren Minghui, Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage/ Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases, World Health Organization. “If people have access to primary care and referral systems then cancer can be detected early, treated effectively and cured. Cancer should not be a death sentence for anyone, anywhere.”

WHO highlights a wide range of proven interventions to prevent new cancer cases. These include controlling tobacco use (responsible for 25% of cancer deaths), vaccinating against hepatitis B to prevent liver cancer, eliminating cervical cancer by vaccinating against HPV, screening and treatment, implementing high-impact cancer management interventions that bring value for money and ensuring access to palliative care including pain relief.