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Govt of Karnataka signs MoU with AstraZeneca to accelerate lung cancer testing

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The initiative to benefit 1.4 lakh patients spread across 19 district hospitals in the state



National Health Mission, Health & Family Welfare Services, Govt of Karnataka has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with AstraZeneca Pharma India to deploy Artificial Intelligence (AI) based lung cancer screening technology developed by Mumbai-based startup Qure.ai that will screen a patient for 29 lung diseases in one chest x-ray.

This AI-powered chest X-ray system will help the government detect lung nodules, often precursors to lung cancer, in 19 district hospitals in Karnataka, overcoming a major early detection challenge.

“Cancer can be treated with curative intent if detected early. We are bringing this technology in all our district hospitals across Karnataka, and we strongly believe that this will emerge as the most beneficial way of detecting lung cancer early and bringing down the financial and emotional burden of healthcare on patients especially who cannot afford even primary care”, said Dinesh Gundu Rao, Minister Health & Family Welfare Department.

In Karnataka, the incidence of cancer is increasing by about 1% each year for both men and women. According to a study by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), cancer cases in Karnataka are expected to increase by 90,000 by 2025. In Bengaluru alone, the most common cancers in men are lung, stomach, esophagus, and prostate. In women, the most common cancers are breast, cervix, ovary, and corpus uteri.

The data collected through this advanced mechanism of disease detection will funnel into various critical healthcare programs of the government and will contribute in tracking and managing national healthcare challenges such as pulmonary tuberculosis as well in India. The real-world evidence will also set the foundation of multiple healthcare programmes and will sharpen strategies to overcome disease burden in the state.

Hospitals where the technology will be deployed over the period of next 12 months are- District Hospitals at Bagalkote, Vijayapura, Dharwad, Gadag, Chkkaballapur, Chikkamagaluru, Chitradurga, Kalburgi, Ramanagaram, Tumkuru, Karwar, Udupi, Yadgiri, Haveri, Madikeri, Kolar, Koppal, Chigateri Hospital, Davanagere, Wenlock Hospital, Mangalore, K C General Hospital, Bangalore.