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## CMC Vellore & IIIT-H develop multilingual AI companion for cancer patients

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Supported by the National Cancer Grid and MeitY's India AI initiative



A multi-partner consortium led by Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore, in collaboration with IIIT Hyderabad's Language Technologies Research Centre (LTRC), is developing BandhuCare – a multilingual AI companion that answers patients' queries in their own language, captures their symptoms through natural conversations, and helps clinicians understand what happens between hospital visits.

Unlike consumer AI assistants that answer virtually anything, BandhuCare emerged after years of working closely with oncology patients and understanding where healthcare delivery quietly breaks down, not during diagnosis or treatment, but between hospital visits.

The consortium brings together clinical expertise from CMC Vellore, AI and language technologies from IIIT-H's Language Technologies Research Centre, startup partner Revan AI, AIIMS Guwahati as an external clinical collaborator, and patient advocacy organisation, PatientsEngage that ensures patient voices remain central to development.

The next phase, which is the pilot study on real cancer patients and specifically head and neck cancer patients, is perhaps the most important. At CMC Vellore, head and neck cancers constitute one of the largest cancer burdens, giving clinicians deep expertise and years of experience in understanding not just the disease, but the long-term challenges patients face after treatment.

Supported by the National Cancer Grid and MeitY's India AI initiative, BandhuCare has reached Technology Readiness Level 5, with ethics approvals in place for clinical pilot studies involving patients.