

Training Workshops for Medical Officers on Cancer Screening and Communication

25th June – 2nd July 2025

A total of 78 Medical Officers (MOs) across Ariyalur district participated in a one-day training workshop at the Government Ariyalur Medical College (GAMC), conducted for over 5 days from the 25th June to the 2nd July 2025. The interactive training for MOs was designed by the JICA team of the TNNCD (Oncology) Project, as a part of its efforts to improve the organisation of the cancer screening programme, being piloted in Ariyalur district.

Specific Objectives of the MOs Training Workshop

- (1) **Enhance communication** between MOs and screening clients, especially those testing positive to motivate them for timely referral and follow-up.
- (2) **Strengthen supervisory capacity** of MOs to ensure the quality in cancer screening services and record keeping.

The workshops were facilitated by the District Program Officer (DPO) and the District Training Team Medical Officer (DTTMO) from the office of DHO, gynaecologists and general surgeons from GAMC, along with members of the JICA project team.



TOT with the training facilitators

Training of Trainers Prior to the MOs' training workshop, the JICA team organised a Training of Trainers (TOT) for the facilitators from the DHO office and GAMC to ensure uniformity of the contents and methodologies throughout the five workshops. Ms. Naomi Imani, Deputy Chief Advisor, and Dr. Dhamodharan, Project Officer of the TNNCD (Oncology) Project, led the TOT, covering basic principles of adult learning, objectives of the training workshop, and contents and methodologies employed in each session of the workshop. A copy of the "Facilitators' Notes" was given to each facilitator as a

reference document. The six Block Medical Officers (BMOs), who are supervisors to the MOs, and the MTM Nodal Officer from the Community Medicine Department, GMCH, also participated in the TOT.

MOs Training Workshop

Clinical knowledge update

On each day, the training workshop began with a self-administered online pre-test and a brief introduction to the participants, facilitators, and the TNNCD (Oncology) Project. This was followed by a session on **(i) the basic concept of cancer screening and (ii) clinical facts and practices of cervical and breast cancer screening and treatment**, delivered through **interactive quiz sessions, combining group competition elements**. The gynaecologists and general surgeons from GAMC led the clinical parts of the discussions, focusing on cervical and breast cancers, respectively, which served as a good opportunity for the MOs **to clarify their doubts related to cervical and breast cancers and the screening processes**.



A general surgeon discussing breast cancer

2) Cancer Screening Communication

The session aimed to strengthen communication between service providers and cervical/breast cancer screening clients, ensuring **the right information is shared at the right time, upholding the clients' rights to information and decision-making**. Using the real-life case examples of the mishaps arising from the miscommunication at the screening, the MOs worked in groups to analyse the root causes and to identify preventive measures, which were then presented as roleplays highlighting challenges and solutions. During the process, the participants were also oriented on **a flipbook being developed by the Project as a job aid for service providers** and encouraged to use it in the role-play.

3) Hands-On with Management Tools

Given the MOs' function as the supervisor to the Staff Nurses and WHVs, the participants were introduced to management tools developed by the Project, i.e., (i) **Female Cancer Screening Register ("Register")**, (ii) **Supervision Checklists for (a) Staff Nurses, (b) WHVs**. The facilitators took the MOs through the Female Cancer Screening Register line-by-line, noting important **data elements that need to be captured to ensure the quality of cancer screening**. With the Supervision Checklist for Staff Nurses, the MOs will be able to check **the quality of the information captured in the Register in a standardised manner**. The Checklist for WHVs was reviewed similarly. The MOs were instructed by the DPO to conduct a review fortnightly with Staff Nurses and monthly with WHVs using these Checklists.



Discussion on client-provider communication at cancer screening

Evaluation of the Training Workshop The analysis of pre- and post-tests indicated a significant **improvement in their overall knowledge, from around 50% marked in the pre-test to 93% in the post-test**. The participants enjoyed the quiz competition, which provided a safe and fun learning environment. On the other hand, many MOs expressed their desire for practical training to improve their screening skills.

With the MOs having multiple responsibilities as providers of primary health care, managers of PHCs, and supervisors to the staff nurses and other facility-based and field-based cadres, a real challenge now would be **the consistent application of the skills and tools in the busy clinical routines** at PHCs, most of which have only one MO. TNNCD (Oncology) Project will be monitoring this aspect jointly with the relevant stakeholders of the TN health administration.

TNNCD (Oncology) Project in Ariyalur district

The pilot interventions in the district aim to improve the organisation of the population-based cancer screening, implemented under the Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam.

Focusing on cervical and breast cancer screening, the project is devising and piloting new tools and systems to streamline the management of the cancer screening programme