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Case study on lung cancer

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Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related mortality worldwide. According to the latest Globocan data 2018, there are 67,795 new cases of lung cancer which comprises around 5.9 percent of all cancer types in India. The data also calls out the increase incidence of lung cancer in India particularly in women and it is not very clear to identify this as many of these women are non-smokers and have still developed lung cancer in younger age.

One such example is Ms. Shailaja Asave, undergoing cancer treatment currently at Tata Memorial. She was detected with lung cancer last February at the fourth stage. This came as a shock to her as she never smoked a cigarette ever, also had a very healthy lifestyle with good eating habits and active physical exercise. For a person to accept this deadly disease is very difficult with a constant mental battle that where one went wrong when it comes to lifestyle habits to get cancer.

Questions like could it be second hand smoking, exposure to pollution or any other reason, these were the thoughts that kept cropping up in her mind. She reached out to the internet sifting through tons of information on why one would get cancer. But sometimes it is a lesser known cause that causes this killer disease which is gene mutation, which has no clear explanation till date.

Sixty seven years old Ms. Shailaja Asave is undergoing target therapy, also known as TKIS. So it is a much painless experience for her when it comes to the treatment, all she has to do is to take a tablet a day. Procedures like chemotherapy, laser therapy and surgery which are said to be quite painful with huge side effects is not something that she is experiencing like many other cancer patients. Though there are some side effects of the tablet but that is quite minimal. Shailaja experiences a certain degree of fatigue, rashes and tiredness.

According to Dr. Kumar Prabhash, Prof., Medical Oncology, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai who is treating Shailaja says “Though cancer is advancing in terms of risk factors leading to the disease and also the type of cancer that we are coming across has changed over the last few decades. Fortunately due to innovation of many successful researches leading to advanced treatments there is targeted therapy, Immunotherapy which are less painful. Talking about immunotherapy this is a treatment option that has evolved over the last six to seven years and is more individualistic and USFDA approved as a standalone and combination therapy.”

Now that shailaja is living with cancer, she is contributing her time to ensure that more healthcare professionals get trained and help more and more cancer patients.

Shailaja says that though she is living with cancer, she does all her daily chores and focuses more on the work that she is doing for the society.