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Cancer Institute (WIA) launches India's first molecular lab for Cervical Cancer Screening

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Roche Diagnostics India has announced the launch of its HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) DNA screening solution at 'Cancer Institute (WIA)' making it India's first Molecular Laboratory for Cervical Cancer Screening.

Persistent infection with high-risk HPV has been established to be the principal cause of cervical cancer in women, with HPV implicated in greater than 99 percent of cervical cancers worldwide.

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The molecular lab launch event which discussed at length the need for screening of cervical cancer saw the presence of dignitaries namely Dr. J Radhakrishnan, Principal Secretary (Health and Family Welfare), Government of Tamil Nadu, Dr. V Shanta, Chairperson, Cancer Institute (WIA), S N Pandey, Managing Director, Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited and Dr. Shravan Subramanyam, Managing Director, Roche Diagnostics India.

India accounts for 20 percent of world-wide prevalence for Cervical Cancer, and has an incidence and mortality rate higher than most regions, including South East Asia. More than 1.2 lakh cervical cancer cases are detected in India annually, making it the second leading cause of cancer after breast cancer.

Chennai stands fourth among the top registries in India with the highest incidence of cervical cancer in women, according to a report from the ICO HPV Information Centre.

According to National Cancer Registry Programme and World Health Organisation, Chennai has reported more of age-adjusted prevalence of the disease.

Dr. V Shantha said, “Cervical cancer is preventable, hence, adopting a comprehensive approach that includes vaccination, effective screening, early diagnosis and treatment has the potential to reduce the existing mortality relating to this cancer. In India, the absence of organised screening programs have contributed to this situation. We in Tamil Nadu, however, have implemented a State-wide cancer registry and the Government of TN has been running a state-wide screening program.”

Speaking at the event, Dr Shravan Subramanyan said, “Roche Diagnostics with its molecular HPV DNA testing has been globally partnering with prestigious Government and private health institutions to enable prevention and early diagnosis of cervical cancer. In India and especially in Tamil Nadu, where the incidence of this completely preventable cancer is high, with the Cancer Institute’s progressive molecular testing lab, we can start making a difference to women’s lives. That this facility is going to be available to women across the State, especially for women in vulnerable communities makes it fulfilling. I am confident that our discussions with the forward-thinking TN State Government will help us implement HPV DNA-based cervical cancer screening across the State to help prevent cervical cancer and save valuable lives.”

Currently, the most commonly used method of screening employed in the developed world is cytology based Pap smears, which has contributed considerably to reducing incidence of, and mortality from, cervical cancer. Another screening method is HPV DNA testing, which has higher sensitivity vis-à-vis cytological screening, and can detect more precancerous lesions than cytology. Hence, it can be implemented with longer intervals between screenings and can potentially help in reducing cervical cancer incidence, and averting more deaths from the disease.