At the cross roads and a new beginning

We are happy to present the inaugural edition of 'Journal of Cancer Research and Therapeutics' - JCRT. This quarterly journal is the official publication of the 'Association of Radiation Oncologists of India - AROI' and was formerly known as 'Journal of Clinical Radiotherapy and Oncology'. While half of the global cancer load is in the developing world, it is an irony that no prominent scientific journal in any branch of cancer is published outside the 'developed' world. It is the need of the hour to reach out to a larger geographical area and disciplines. The new name of the journal is intended to reflect this holistic aspiration. It will be our earnest effort to fill this void with the ultimate aim of promoting cancer research, sharing hypothesis and treatment results and setting management standards that can be achieved despite the resource constraints. This is very pertinent considering the marked differences in the lifestyle, demographics, pattern of cancers, presentation, infrastructure and sometimes treatment philosophies.

In addition to the print version, JCRT will be available full text on the world wide web (www.cancerjournal.net). The full contents of the journal will be available to all readers free on the website. Open access movement is based on the ideology of shared knowledge. Does knowledge like ground water belong to everyone or to the owner of the well? Historically in India knowledge was created and perpetuated by Brahmins and outsiders were not welcome. Similarly, the knowledge created by Pythagoras and his group was zealously guarded as secrets of the cult. Leonardo Da Vinci wrote some of his discoveries in reverse to maintain secrecy. The times have not really changed much. Even today, scientific information is guarded and journals that attract high quality research articles have a penchant for exploiting their position for commercial profits. Open access movement aims to make the knowledge base accessible to all those who need it. JCRT is proud to be part of this movement.

The editorial team with members from various disciplines and geographical regions would work to provide a platform for sharing research and experiences covering the entire range from cancer prevention to palliation. On-line submission and editorial review is aimed to facilitate submission of original research articles and high quality topical reviews in basic, translational, clinical and epidemiological research from all parts of the world. In addition, the Journal will feature 'Letters from the 5 continents' and 'Country Cancer Reports' from different parts of the world. These audits, status reports and perspectives hopefully would bring out the cancer load, prevalent cancers and habits, national cancer programmes, facilities for treatment and palliation and manpower status in different regions. We feel that this compilation would be an important resource, highlighting lacunae in health care planning and resources allocation in different parts of the world. This would aid in setting realistic goals and suitable strategies for countries facing similar challenges.

Afro-Asia is diverse in its culture and, heterogeneous in riches. There are countries where poverty itself is death. The treatment strategies obviously can not be the same or the one proposed by the west. Evidence of the best options must be evolved from those therapeutic strategies available for each milieu. It is also possible that there are racial differences, which affect the outcome of treatments. All this and more makes it imperative to have a journal which will reflect the uniqueness and differences. JCRT is the one designed to address the concerns of a large part of the world. It is hoped that the existing lacuna in the present publishing world will be erased with this effort.

The inaugural edition includes articles related to male breast cancer, predictive assays looking at apoptosis and cell membrane changes, as well as TMG a novel radiation protector. In the 'Letters from Europe', Professor John Yarnold summarises the findings of his extensive field research travelling through different parts of India on the status of radiotherapy facilities in 1978. In this very interesting and accurate account he has traced the developments in the field over a quarter of century and draws interesting parallels with the United Kingdom. The book reviews include, ‘Development of an Atlas of Cancer in India’ and ‘Paediatric Radiation Oncology’. The case report of radiation associated sarcoma deals with an interesting treatment dilemma. The reviews on breast cancer and algorithms of treatment planning systems are topical. All this we hope makes an interesting and, instructive reading.