

Call for tailor-made treatment for cancer patients

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

"GENETIC tests based personalised medication will vastly improve cancer care," said Dr Mohammed Naveed, consultant geneticist, department of paediatrics, Fujairah Hospital, UAE, while delivering the silver jubilee talk of the department of genetics at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research. Instead of a trial-and-error method oncologists can select the most appropriate treatment tailored to a patient's genotype, avoid medications of lower efficacy and greater toxicity and also adopt dis-



ease prevention strategies leading to greater patient satisfaction, improved adherence to therapy and reduced healthcare costs. In India, genetic tests can be carried out for less than ₹25,000. While it might appear costly it is a better, safer and cost-effective process he said.

Today prenatal genetic testing is also available to detect single gene or rare genetic disorders like thalassemia, cystic fibrosis of the lungs, Tay-sach's disease that affect the nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord, Gaucher's disease that affects the spleen and

liver, and sickle cell disease. A prenatal diagnosis at 10 to 12 weeks of pregnancy can help a pregnant mother to abort in case of serious anomalies. It is also advisable to do a pre-implantation genetic diagnosis before invitro fertilisation (IVF) to avoid genetic disorders, he added.

A member of the Experts Advisory Board of the Thalassaemia International Federation, Dr Naveed said that in many western countries genetic testing is becoming common and even medical insurance is available for some tests. In India a greater interaction between geneticists and clini-

cians is needed and genetic testing led precision medicine should be part of the medical curricula he added.

Speaking on the occasion Dr Vikram Jayanth founding HoD of the Genetics at SRIHER, and research director, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, said the department should be upgraded as a centre of excellence in genomics. The chancellor VR Venkatachalam unveiled a plaque to commemorate the silver jubilee of the genetics department. The vice chancellor Dr Uma Sekar, dean Research, Dr Kalpana Balakrishnan, principal, Faculty of Biomedical Science and Technology Dr Solomon Paul, and HoD, Human Genetics Dr P Venkatachalam, participated in the event.

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