Summary of commencement of cervical cancer extension program in Padhar, Madhya Pradesh

**Report outline:**

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1. Introduction

The department of RUHSA, Christian Medical College, Vellore, along with Global Initiative Against HPV and Cervical Cancer (GIAHC) and its other international partners has continued its engagement with the community and is now in the process of developing satellite projects throughout India wherever feasible.

2. Extension of cancer screening services to Padhar, Madhya Pradesh

One of the highlights of 2016 was the extension of cancer screening services to Padhar hospital. Padhar Hospital is a charitable Christian Mission Hospital registered under the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh. It is situated in Betul district located in the southern border of Madhya Pradesh on the National Highway (No- 69) joining Nagpur (south, 200 kms) and Bhopal (north, 160 kms). This district is located on the central highlands of India, in a very rural setting among Tribals named Gonds.

Padhar hospital currently serves 75 villages in and around Padhar covering a population of about 80,000 people. Padhar hospital is committed to take the community based cancer screening services to Padhar block of Betul district.

In Padhar hospital, there are 10 Community Service Providers/CSP with a head manager.
The CSP are the action group for all community initiatives / projects carried out by Padhar, and they are full-time staff of the hospital.

- There are at least 10 community projects being run by Padhar hospital, and the cervical cancer screening is the new addition.
- The community department has done an extensive household survey of 75 villages, and they have a complete data needed for any community-based project. The villages were mapped as well – a useful tool for planning community based cancer-screening services as well.
- A camp approach is being followed in Padhar. The strategy is to cover a panchayat area and then move on to another, and not simultaneously in many panchayat areas.
- The CSP act as facilitators in mobilizing the women in the community to undergo cervical cancer screening through Educate, Screen and Treat approach.
- During the camp, two nurses of Padhar hospital who were trained by RUHSA to do VIA tests in the villages conduct screening in the community.
- The anganwadi centres in the villages are converted into a camp site with adequate privacy for cervical cancer screening.
- Those who were detected (first via) positive during the camps are encouraged to come to Padhar hospital for a repeat VIA by an in-house Obgs & Gyne consultant.
- The next level of screening that includes biopsy will also be performed as necessary.
- Padhar hospital has an oncology department with facilities for cancer treatment.

3. Activities

I. “Educate” component: Padhar block, Betul District (covered by Padhar Hospital)
- Community awareness programmes using Nukkad-Natak (Street play), TV shows etc. have been planned to promote cancer screening among women.
- The documentary “Lady Ganga” was shown to them and explained in Hindi.
• The Hindi posters and handbills developed by RUHSA will be made available to Padhar soon.

• The posters will be displayed in Anganwadi centres – a meeting point for women in the community, and other strategic places.

II. Screen and Treat: Several hundred women were screened and treated with VIA and cryotherapy respectively.

4. Challenges:

There has been a positive output in getting the women to undergo cervical cancer screening at the community/first level through community education, peer support, and through the rapport of field workers.

The major challenge now (particularly in Padhar) is to get those screened positive in the community to the hospital/second level since there are no symptoms at this stage. The CSP are constantly engaged in a dialogue with them, their family members motivating them to come for a check-up at Padhar hospital.
5. Action plan for the near future

To continue existing health education campaigns followed by screening through routine as well as camp approach in RUHSA & Padhar

a. Renewed thrust on community education/awareness efforts with potential stakeholders in the community
b. To empower the patient with knowledge and support so that increasing number of women who tested positive at the community level will turn up for second VIA at the hospital and subsequent treatment modalities.