

Workshop for further enhancement of the cancer screening programme in Tamil Nadu

on 2nd December 2025 at Saibaba Hotel, T. Nagar, Chennai



On December 2, 2025, twenty-six health administrators engaged in cancer screening at the state or district level came together to discuss integration of the outputs and lessons learnt from the pilot interventions under the Project for Prevention and Control of NCDs in Tamil Nadu (“TNNCD”) into the Community based Organized Cancer Screening (“the OCS”).

The OCS was designed by the health administrators who participated in a two-week training in Japan organised by the TNNCD. Started in November 2023, the initiative now covers 27 HUDs with the aim to boost cancer screening uptake through (i) a structured invitation system and (ii) offering the services closer to the communities at HSCs. Meanwhile, TNNCD kept its focus on improving the managerial capacity of the DHFW, devising and testing tools and systems for organised cancer screening through its pilot interventions in Ariyalur district.

State-level participants, drawn from NHM and all the three Directorates, included AD NHM, JDs of DPH and DMS and MTM nodal officer of DME, while Coimbatore, Kanchipuram, Madurai, Ranipet, Tiruvallur, Trichy, and Vellore districts were represented by DHOs, DPOs, MTM nodal officers and/or MTM coordinators. From Ariyalur, the pilot district of TNNCD, DHO, DPO/NCD and DTTMO joined to share their experiences.

Objectives of the Workshop

1. Take a stock of the progress made, tools and materials produced/deployed and lessons learnt under TNNCD and “the OCS” initiative.
2. Contribute to standardisation of tools and modalities to be used by all the districts for implementation and management of the TN’s cancer screening programme; and
3. Identify areas and actions needed to further enhance organisation of the TN’s cancer screening programme.

The one-day workshop started with the participants levelling their understanding of “organised cancer screening” through a set of quiz and discussions, noting (i) the distinctions between routine cancer screening and early diagnosis interventions and (ii) a standard set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used for monitoring the quality of cancer screening programme.



Quiz session about concept and practices of organised cancer screening

The subsequent sessions focused on the modalities and challenges related to the call operations, data management, public sensitization and training related to them. The Ariyalur district team shared their implementation experiences and the tools developed under TNNCD, including various IEC materials designed to induce action by audience, registers designed to capture necessary data to enable appropriate computation of KPIs and interactive training modules for WHVs, Staff Nurses/MLHPs and MOs.

The forum noted meticulousness of the TNNCD pilot interventions and acknowledged that organised cancer screening is not just a standardized set of activities but a programme to be continuously build up and shaped up, integrating lessons learnt and new developments. In this



Discussing utilisation of the materials produced under TNNCD Project

light, the participants also discussed achievements and challenges faced by the OCS and what measures should/could be taken to address them. These included the needs (i) to ensure meaningful communication to motivate eligible individuals, (ii) to ensure quality of the screening services provided, (iii) to strengthen the data system and management and (iv) to train/orient all cadres involved in cancer screening appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

The one-day workshop, proven to be too short, ended with identification of a number of follow-up actions to strengthen the OCS utilizing the materials and experiences from the TNNCD. With the TNNCD winding up its operation in a few months' time, the workshop provided a forum for collective learning for health administrators, enabling alignment between district and state teams, paving the way for a more standardised and strengthened cancer screening programme in Tamil Nadu.

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