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World Cancer Day: Why it's Crucial to Debunk Cancer Myths

Cancer Myths: Why it's Crucial to Debunk Them
With one third of all cancer cases being potentially preventable, it's very important to know the signs and symptoms of cancer

4th February 2014 is World Cancer Day, an opportunity for the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to raise one voice in improving general knowledge surrounding cancer and dismissing misconceptions about the disease.

The World Cancer Day campaign focuses on Target 5 of the World Cancer Declaration: Reduce stigma and dispel myths about cancer, under the tagline "Debunk the myths." The focus of the message is on these four myths:

- We don't need to talk about cancer
- There are no signs or symptoms of cancer
- There's nothing I can do about cancer
- I don't have the right to cancer care

The global burden of cancer has long been recognised with around 70% of all cancer deaths in 2008 occurring in low- and middle-income countries. Cancer is now a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for 7.6 million deaths (around 13% of all deaths) in 2008.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized lung, stomach, liver, colon and breast cancer as the causes of the most cancer deaths each year.

About 30% of cancer deaths are due to high body mass index, low fruit and vegetable intake, lack of physical activity, tobacco use, alcohol use.

The global impact of cancer has made World Cancer Day a truly international event, and one in which GE Healthcare are proud to support.

In June last year, GE Healthcare commissioned new research that revealed the burden bad habits and lifestyle choices were having on global healthcare systems, adding approximately $33.9 billion per year to costs linked to cancer care.

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The study showed that the escalating cost of cancer care could be offset with annual savings of $25 billion to the cancer care bill if individuals took positive steps towards eliminating bad habits such as smoking, alcohol consumption, poor nutrition and physical inactivity from their lifestyles. This infographic particularly highlights the link between bad habits and breast cancer. (article continues below)

In 2011, GE Healthcare dedicated $1 billion of its total R&D budget to expand its advanced cancer diagnostic and molecular imaging capabilities. The company has also devoted considerable resources in educating and raising awareness of cancer.

Additionally, in order to challenge a larger audience to make a difference in making the world cancer-free, GE Healthcare is collaborating with the American Cancer Society and its global partners to drive engagement. This year, along with the company's social media outreach, guests can participate in collaborative webinars, where academic and physician thought leaders are brought in. The focus will be on healthy habits, cancer prevention, breast health and family history.

More information on the World Cancer Day can be found on the event website.

Source: GE Healthcare

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