Climate change led vulnerability and disruptions in treatment access to cancer patients in Sikkim in Northeast India

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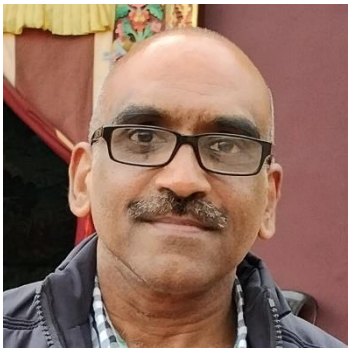
Climate Change impact on the access to treatment for people with Non Communicable diseases (NCD) is becoming an important public health concern. This is very critical to people affected with cancer who need to comply with the treatment very strictly. The climate changes and the resulting geographic changes has been identified as a reason for treatment disruptions. This short research attempted to answer what is the extent of treatment disruptions of cancer patients in Sikkim. The study was done among the people affected with various cancer. 100 patients have been randomly recruited from the outpatient care department of the state cancer hospital in Gangtok in Sikkim. Patients who are on treatment has been selected. Those who completed treatment and were visiting OPD for review have been excluded from the study. The disruptions in the treatment therapies that prescribed for the patients has been explored analyzed in detail. The climatic changes the bad road landslides and difficulty to travel has been seen as major reasons for disruptions. It has very important effect on the cost as well as the quality of outcome.



Toms K Thomas is a graduate of Erasmus University (the Netherlands) and an alumni of the Institute of Tropical Medicine (Belgium), with more than 30 years of extensive experience in various public health domains, including health innovations, implementation research, digital health, monitoring & evaluation, public health training, teaching, among others. He currently works as Professor and Head of the School of Public Health at SRM University Sikkim.

Thomas published over twenty scientific articles and led many health innovations. He established two digital health startups in India and holds many prestigious awards, fellowship and national and international prizes. Recent grants awarded include the research grant by ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) to conduct research in the area of economic burden of cancer patients (Breast Cancer, Cervical Cancer and Lung Cancer) in the North East India, the grant from Software Technology Park of India (STPI) under Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India to implement a Digital Health Project, and a grant to develop a device to screen oral cancer using AI supported by the Department of Bio Technology (DBT). Thomas is also a recognised PhD supervisor and currently supervises three PhD students. Apart from this, he also collaborates with many international universities on Public Health Research and Innovations.