



Global Consortium for Breast Cancer in Young Women

The Global Consortium for Breast Cancer in Young Women (GCBCYW) is a growing international organization that resides at the heart of issues germane to breast cancer in young women of all backgrounds. GCBCYW is fulfilling the strategic goals of the participating cancer institutions, universities, and affiliate organizations by developing collaborative solutions to address the growing incidents of breast cancer in young women in many parts of the world.

Vision: Fight against breast cancer in young women while working together with leading cancer institutions and other organizations around the globe.

Mission: Develop a cellular understanding of breast cancer through cutting-edge translational research, shared academic programs and promoting awareness and education for early detection and self-breast care.

GCBCYW's international partners in the fight against breast cancer in young women include:

Cancer Research Institute, Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences, Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun, India
Lisbon Academic Medical Centre, Lisbon, Portugal
Graduate School of Medicine and Faculty of Medicine Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, India
Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, New Delhi, India
Team Shan, Huntsville, Canada
Young Survival Collation, New York City, United States

Background and the purpose

Over the decades, cancer medicine has come a long way and made substantial advances in early diagnosis of women breast cancer, allowing effective intervention and treatment. These gains, however, do not fully address breast cancer in young women under the age of 40. This younger group of women are experiencing a rise in breast cancer, including in countries like India, United States, Japan, and Portugal. In general, the prognosis of breast cancer in young women ("BCYW") is more dangerous compared to older patients—both pre- and postmenopausal. This elevated risk is likely the result of our limited understanding of the underlying pathobiology of BCYW and upstream causative factors. The younger women are generally excluded from breast cancer public screening programs, except for about 12-15% of high-risk breast cancer in young women cases with suspected predisposed genes.

As opposed to breast cancer in other age groups, BCYW patients pose unique challenges in the context of treatment decision-making, prognosis, survivorship, treatment-associated fertility issues, and career, emotional, economic, and social connectivity. In response, Prof. Rakesh Kumar, the principal founder, and colleagues realized that the scientific knowledge and general public awareness of breast cancer in young women will benefit immensely by adopting a global collaborative approach. For this reason, they established GCBCYW, which functions as a multidisciplinary team of leading medical and surgical oncologists, cancer biologists, genomics experts, outreach non-governmental organizations, and social awareness activists, to provide innovative solutions to some of the core challenges, if not all, faced by young women with breast cancer globally.

The founding team



Rakesh Kumar, PhD
Emeritus Distinguished Professor
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Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences, SRHU, India
Scientific Director - GCBCYW



Luis Costa, MD, PhD
Professor and Director of Medical Oncology
Principal Investigator – Institute of Molecular Medicine
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Scientific Director - GCBCYW



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Tadashi Isa, MD, PhD
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Vaishali Zamre, MBBS, MCh
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Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre, India
Scientific Co-Director - GCBCYW



Shashwat Sharad, PhD
Principal Research Officer
Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre, India
Scientific Co-Director - GCBCYW

Research focus: fight against breast cancer

The core of GCBCYW translational research is to gain an improved understanding of the cellular basis of sporadic and hereditary breast cancer in young women through cutting-edge proteogenomic and epigenomic research using breast tissues and biologic fluids. The team's approach is to use a standard procedures across institutions, providing an opportunity to study the influence of a variety of variables, including geo-racial and ethnic disparities, on the biology of breast cancer in young women.

Awareness focus: self-breast care and early detection

Though incidences of breast cancer in young women are growing in many parts of the globe, a small number of suspected BCYW cases reach healthcare facilities. There is an urgent need to speed-up our outreach effort to create increased awareness about the disease, significance of self-breast care in women's health, strengthen patient participation and survivorship, spread the message that breast cancer is not only a disease of older women and early detection remains the key to our fight against BCYW, and develop a network of early detection and awareness support.

International knowledge sharing

The GCBCYW mission is to promote academic exchanges among member institutions, to organize a forum of visionaries in cancer medicine, and to hold meetings to discuss and debate the most pressing issues with BCYW, for exchanging research and awareness ideas and provide a forum to breast cancer survivors and patient advocates to inspire others by sharing their journeys and stories.

Scientific advisory committee



Padma Bhushan Prof. Nirmal Kumar Ganguly, MD, PhD
Ex-Director General
Indian Council of Medical Research, India



Prof. Ferid Muard, MD, PhD
Nobel Laurate in Medicine
Stanford VA Research Institute, USA



Prof. Subrata Sinha, MD, PhD
Head of Biochemistry and Dean of Research
All India Institute of Medical Science - New Delhi, India



Prof. Robert Clarke, PhD, DSc
Executive Director - Hormel Institute
I. J. Holton Chair in Cancer Research, University of Minnesota, USA



Prof. Radhakrishna Pillai, PhD
Ex-Director, Rajiv Gandhi Center for Biotechnology, India



Prof. Sarawati Sukumar, PhD
Barbara B. Rubenstein Professor of Oncology
Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins, USA



Prof. Keshav Singh, PhD
Joy & Bill Herbert Endowed Chair in Cancer Genetics
University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA



Prof. Pranela Rameshwar, PhD
Hematology-Oncology, Department of Medicine
Rutgers New Jersey School of Medicine, USA

Awareness advisory committee



Lorna Larsen, RN, BScN, Team Shan – President, Canada

Lorna brings her public health and senior management expertise to her role as President of Team Shan Breast Cancer Awareness for Young Women (Team Shan), a national charity dedicated to educating the public, health care professionals and young women about awareness, early detection, risk reduction and prevention of breast cancer. Visit: teamshan.ca



Mary Farrell Ajango, MPA, Director - Advocacy & Partnerships, Young Survival Coalition, USA

Established in 1998, Young Survival Coalition (YSC) is an international non-profit dedicated exclusively to young adults diagnosed with breast cancer age 40 and under and their co-survivor support networks. Through educational resources and programming, annual conferences, and local and online support networks, YSC ensures no young adult faces breast cancer alone. Visit: youngsurvival.org



Catarina Vasconcelos, BA, MA (Visual Communication), Portugal

Catarina Vasconcelos is an international acclaimed Portuguese film writer, director and producer, and interested in social issues affecting breast cancer patients. She is known for her documentaries, short films and creative work, including, a best award winning International Short Film at the Paris Film Festival Cinema du Réel - The Metamorphosis of Birds (2020), and many others.

GCBCYW member institutions and affiliate organizations are advancing the knowledge of breast cancer in young women, discovering predictive biomarkers, and promoting awareness and survivorship among targeted age group of women locally, nationally, and internationally.



Swami Rama Himalayan University
स्वामी राम हिमालय विश्वविद्यालय



Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute
and Research Centre

TATA MEMORIAL CENTRE
ADVANCED CENTRE FOR TREATMENT
RESEARCH & EDUCATION IN CANCER



YSC | YOUNG SURVIVAL
COALITION*
Young adults facing breast cancer together

For more information and how you can help the GCBCYW's mission, contact: rakeshkumar@srhu.edu.in
www.srhu.edu.in/gbcyw