

Report: Formation and Initial activities of Ostomy Support Group in Kerala

Kerala Association of surgical oncologist with the grand in aid from Indian Association of Surgical Oncology is conducting a program to support ostomates who had undergone surgery for rectal cancer. This programme commenced by as at starting a WhatsApp group. This group consists of ostomates, surgical oncologists, colorectal surgeons and stoma care nurses. The first event was starting a WhatsApp group and we have added nearly 50 ostomates to begin with. Then a physical meeting was conducted on 25 November 2023. This meeting is conducted to foster a supportive environment wherein ostomates could come together, share their experiences, and interact directly with experts in the field, addressing their queries and concerns regarding stoma care. These meetings also offered a unique opportunity for attendees to interact directly with representatives from various ostomy products manufacturing companies and also receive some useful stoma care products for free.

The latest Ostomy Support Group Meeting was convened on November 25th, 2023, at the Knowledge Hall of the Medical College Hospital in Trivandrum. Approximately 20 members, along with representatives from Stoma care product manufacturers, had gathered to discuss various aspects of ostomy care and support.

The meeting had commenced with Dr. Chandramohan, Additional Professor at RCC, presiding over the gathering. Smt. Geethakumari B.S., the enterostomal therapist (ET), had warmly welcomed the attendees, setting a positive tone for the discussions ahead.

Dr. Chandramohan had emphasized the importance of forming an Ostomy Support Group Society, highlighting its benefits and addressing the challenges faced by ostomates. A comprehensive presentation on stoma types and management had been delivered by Smt. Geethakumari B.S., shedding light on the critical role of family members during the transitional phase.

Figure 1 Ostomates Interacting



Attendees had engaged in fruitful discussions, addressing concerns regarding post-chemotherapy challenges and exploring various stoma care products with company representatives. Some members had voiced concerns about the lack of financial support from

Figure.2 Talk by Dr Chandramohan



the Central Government, underscoring the need for broader assistance.

Members had shared personal experiences, offering valuable insights into successful stoma management in daily life. Additionally, three main representatives and several executive members had been selected to spearhead the group's initiatives, ensuring diverse representation and effective leadership.

Smt. Geethakumari B.S. had extended gratitude to all participants, concluding the meeting on a note of appreciation and camaraderie. The event had concluded at 12:30 p.m., followed by a refreshment session, with plans underway for the next meeting in the near future.

Next meeting is sheduled in March 2024 .We are planning to disribute stoma bags to all participants.The assocoation like to get formally registered and commence its activity.

FIGURE 3 Talk by Stoma Care Nurse

