SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR RADIATION THERAPY PATIENTS & STAFF AMID CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

IN CONCLUSION

An advisory by the association of radiation oncologists of India (AROI) for radiation therapy patients and staff amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Cancer patients are more susceptible to infection because of the following reasons:

- Undergoing treatment in form of chemotherapy, radiotherapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy
- Patients with hematological malignancies
- Transplant patients on immunosuppressive therapy
- Elderly cancer patients with medical comorbidities

In order to contain the spread of novel COVID-19, some precautionary measures are required to be taken.

HOW DO YOU SUSPECT A COVID 19 CASE:

A patient with fever & cough and breathing difficulty with:

- Contact with suspected & confirmed COVID19 cases in the last few weeks
  Traveled to any of the countries where local transmission going on (WHO document)
- Healthcare worker caring for a confirmed COVID19 pts
- Severe pneumonia or ARDS
- A person living in the same household as COVID 19 case or direct contact with COVID 19 case without proper PPE
- Face to face contact with COVID 19 case within 1 meter or closed environments like an airplane or closed room gatherings
DIRECTIVE TO PATIENTS:

• Follow social distancing
• Stay at home as much as possible
• Avoid crowded areas
• Wash your hands frequently and correctly with a soap/sanitizer
• Consider delaying your palliative radiotherapy if it is only for minor symptom relief and has no impact on outcome or disease control
• Elderly patients, especially with symptoms, are at highest risk and extra precaution should be taken

DIRECTIVES TO HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS:

GENERAL MEASURES:

• Provide a clean and spacious waiting area with adequate distance between Chairs
• Provide mask and hand hygiene aids like sanitizer, hand-wash, gloves at outpatient area
• Protocol for temperature and vitals checking for patients
• Special care to suspected/vulnerable patients by dedicated & trained staff
• Protocol for COVID-19 screening & isolation
• All international travelers should submit a self-declaration form which can be submitted at the counters
• Certain countries are high transmission countries and travelers from those countries are advised to undergo 14 days self-quarantine from the date of arrival
• All such suspected patients should be handled as per institutional policies and guidelines/helplines provided by the government