**OP** 47: **Prevalence of cancer in Jaffna, a population based study**

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**Background:** Cancer is a disabling and in many cases fatal illness. The prevalence of cancer varies from one geographical area to the other. The objective of this study was to describe the prevalence of cancer in Jaffna district.

**Methodology:** The present study was carried out in six out of seven Medical Officer of Health areas in Jaffna district. One hundred and twelve family health workers (FHW) were utilized to screen the population in the initial stage. Whenever FHW visited a home for her routine work she recorded total members living in the household, number of diagnosed cancer patients and number of suspected cancer patients. For each diagnosed and suspected cancer patient more details were recorded. This procedure was followed fromApril to July 2004. Each one of the suspected and diagnosed cases of cancers identified by the FHW was subsequently visited by a medical officer to confirm or exclude the diagnosis. Doubtful cases to the medical officers were seen by the oncologist. **Result: A total** of 251 987 persons were screened by 112 FHWs and 447 cancer patients (diagnosed in a tertiary care center) were identified. Prevalence of cancer in Jaffna district was 177.4 (per 100 000 populations). Breast cancer was the commonest cancer (50.8). Lip, oral cavity and pharynx (37.7) and female genital tract (22.62) were the second and third leading site for cancer respectively. **Conclusions:** High prevalence of cancer was observed in Jaffna. Breast, oral cavity, and female genital tract account for majority of the cancers.