

**Presentation title: Healthcare expenses, financial coping strategies and their impact on household welfare among cancer patients in public and private hospitals in Nepal: A cross-sectional study.**



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**Presentation type: Oral presentation**

**Abstract (250-300 words):**

Cancer is among the major killers and main causes of disability across all countries in the world. Due to high cost of care, households with cancer have no options but to face the burden of catastrophic health expenditure (CATA), impoverishment and mental distress. In this study, a complete evaluation of direct, indirect and psychosocial cost due to cancer management was done. This was a comparative cross-sectional study of 400 respondents, which were taken from two tertiary health centers, one private and the other public institution in Nepal. Data was collected using CommCare, a mobile based data collection app which consisted of an interviewer-based questionnaire. The psychological distress was measured using a validated DASS-21 tool for cancer patients and their caregivers. Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses were carried out. This study found that, 40% and 74% of the patients from public and private hospital incurred OOP expense respectively. Among the respondents at public and private hospital, 33.7% and 60.2% incurred CATA and 21.1% and 59% incurred impoverishment respectively. Households identified several coping strategies such as using current income, borrowing from family and friends, using government and other subsidies, and cutting-down non-food expenses to manage the cost of cancer care. This study found that more than two-third of cancer patients at public hospital had depression (68.5%) and anxiety (72.7%) symptoms. More than

one-half of them had symptoms of stress (53.1%). Among those at a private hospital, nearly two-thirds had depression (64.7%), anxiety (63.9%) and symptoms of stress (63.9%). The management of cancer care is being done at an expense of financial catastrophe including mental distress of cancer patients and their caregivers, irrespective of type of health facility involved. Government must also prioritize strengthening mental health systems while implementing financial protection mechanisms in Nepal.

**Biography (150-200 words):**

Ankit Acharya specializes in research within the realms of public health and economics. His enthusiasm lies in employing innovative methods, particularly integrating creative arts approaches into public health research.