



News

CNCLD shares knowledge of revolutionary liver cancer treatment with foreign doctors

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By Kumudini Hettiarachchi

It was a “reverse” exchange of expertise as several foreign doctors from the region flew into Sri Lanka to arm themselves with knowledge on how to revolutionise cancer treatment back in their home countries, side-by-side with local doctors.

Usually, Sri Lankan doctors go to centres of excellence across the globe to strengthen their expertise.

This, however, was different. Radiologists from India, Bangladesh and China and also Sri Lanka who specialise in treating liver cancer patients gathered for a two-day workshop on ‘Liver Microwave Ablation (MWA) and Microwave Ablation combined with open surgery’ on March 27 and 28 at one of Sri Lanka’s very own centres of excellence – the Colombo North Center for Liver Disease (CNCLD) based at the Colombo North Teaching Hospital, Ragama.



A glance at an
inoperative Microwave
Ablation (MWA) in the
theatre

The CNCLD team
which includes Prof.
Rohan Siriwardana,
Dr. Suchintha
Tillakaratne, Dr.
Bhaagya Gunetilleke
and Dr. Oshini
Amarasinghe with the
workshop participants

Dr. Eranga Ganewatte
explaining Microwave
Ablation (MWA) in
much detail

The crux of the training was how MWA is a safe and effective treatment modality for liver tumours in Asia and beyond, with hopes of advancement for this procedure.

The hands-on trainers, experts in liver tumour ablation using microwaves, were Consultant Radiologists Dr. Chinthaka Appuhamy and Dr. Eranga Ganewatte; Professor of Gastroenterology & Hepatobiliary Surgeon, Prof. Rohan Siriwardana; Professor in Gastroenterology, Prof. Madunil Niriella; Senior Lecturers & Consultant Anaesthetists Dr. Bhaagya Gunetilleke & Dr. Oshani Amarasinghe; Lecturer & Gastrointestinal Surgeon Dr. Suchintha Tillakaratne; and Consultant Gastroenterologist Dr. Uditha Dassanayake.

“In the region, usually knowledge sharing is done either on MWA or open surgery exclusively. At this workshop, there was the added element of the combination of MWA with open surgery, when necessary,” a CNCLD spokesperson said, adding that it was the “unique” aspect of the workshop.

MWA is a minimally invasive procedure under which, with imaging guidance (ultrasound and CT scan), the tumour is localised (restricted), and a thin (14.5-gauge) microwave antenna is placed directly into it. Electromagnetic microwaves agitate water molecules in the surrounding tissue, increasing their kinetic energies and heat them up to 105°C, thus inducing cellular death.

This procedure is an effective treatment option for patients with primary liver cancer or other cancers that have spread to the liver, especially when surgery is not possible or suitable. This procedure can also be combined with other treatment such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy or tumour resection (surgical removal of a tumour).

The workshop consisted of lectures, demonstrations, case discussions and practical sessions on MWA using real-time liver tumour ablations. The lectures were designed to deliver knowledge regarding each aspect of patient preparation and management.

“The participants were able to gain a knowledge about the indications for MWA, how to identify suitable candidates for this procedure, patient optimization before MWA, contraindications for procedure, possible short-term and long-term complications and how to manage them,” the spokesperson said, explaining that they gained a thorough understanding of comprehending the outcome of each individual procedure and how to follow-up these patients.

The technical aspects of MWA such as needle placement, ablation zone size, power settings and duration were also explained in detail to participants with the aid of live demonstrations in ward settings as well as in a theatre setting. They also saw how the multidisciplinary treatment approach worked for the maximum benefit of the patients.

While the appreciation of the participants flowed forth, the workshop also strengthened networking and collaboration among radiologists from different countries.

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