

Philippines physicians discuss cancer treatment

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By [Michele Catahay](#)

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Guam patients heard today from three physicians from the Medical City Hospital based in the Philippines, all talking about various aspects of cancer care. Medical director Dr. Manual Francisco Roxas says they currently provide services like screening and multi specialty treatment for all types of cancers. In addition he says over the last decade, chemotherapy treatment, screening programs and surgery have greatly improved.

He says from what he's seen, death rates resulting in cancer have gone down. "This is because of good screening programs as well as very aggressive and specialized cancer treatment. That's the first message we have to bring here that cancer is treatable and curable as long as you get screened early. If you get diagnosed with cancer, it's a favorable stage," he told KUAM News.

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Dr. Roxas says screening for all types of cancer like breast, colorectal, prostate and gynecologic cancers is critical. The Medical City Hospital offers screenings for specific diseases. "We have a very good breast clinic where we have breast radiologist as well as breast surgeons focusing just on breast disease who can diagnose breast disease in minimal invasive ways," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Daniel Alonzo says more people on Guam have head and neck cancers, mostly due to lifestyle issues like excessive smoking, drinking and even betel-nut chewing. He says in his field, it's most difficult to handle head and neck cancers because physicians must be able to handle the patient's appearance, breathing, swallowing and speaking abilities.

"It's so difficult for a single specialist to handle all the different issues that are going to be affected, the different functions that are going to be affected when a patient gets head and neck cancer," he explained.

Dr. Michael Mejia, a radiation oncologist, says it's important for people to be educated about the disease its harsh realities. Fortunately, over the past decade, there has been an advance in technology and radiation. He noted, "Despite cancer care being more dependent on high technology, the foundation - the basis for the outcome - is not just in technology, but it should be in the hands of competent and compassionate individuals who can make the most of what's technologically available."

The Medical City physicians say they will continue its partnership with TakeCare to provide more informative discussions in the future.

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