

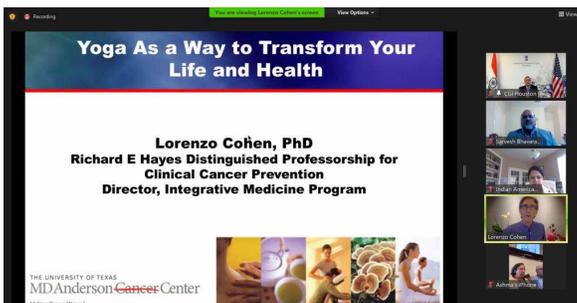
The Indian American Cancer Network is a 501(c) nonprofit cancer resource organization whose mission is to serve the South Asian community through education, resources, and support of those affected by cancer. The vision of IACAN is that every Indian American reduces their cancer risk by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and that no Indian American travels the cancer journey alone.

A Message from the President

As we enter the year 2021, IACAN continues to function with an indomitable spirit despite the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic. We adjusted to the new ways of staying connected to the community through creativity and innovation, raised cancer awareness, and served cancer patients and caregivers. This was possible because of our zealous board members and the support of many people who have helped enable our cause. I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *The OPTIMIST* about the events that IACAN has hosted over the last six months. Enjoy the summer with your family and stay safe. Please reach out to us and give us the opportunity to help you.

Monalisa Chandra, President, IACAN

Yoga as a Way to Transform your Life and Health



On Saturday, February 7th, IACAN hosted a webinar presented by the eminent scholar Dr. Lorenzo Cohen, Professor in the Department of General Oncology and Behavioral Sciences and Director of Integrative Medicine Program at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. The program was supported by the Consulate General of India (CGI) and the Jain Society of Houston. Honorable Aseem Mahajan, CGI, and Mr. Jagdip Ahluwalia, Executive Director of Indian Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston, were the special guests for this program. The content of the webinar is summarized as follows:

It is now clear that Yoga’s popularity around the world has gone well beyond a fad or passing curiosity. The burgeoning field of mind-body research and contemplative practices in medicine, of which yoga from the Indian tradition is prominent, is beginning to show that the contribution of these practices to health and wellbeing go well beyond the simple relaxation response. Yoga when practiced in a comprehensive manner including asana, pranayama, meditation, diet, and social consciousness will have profound effects on all aspects of life. In fact, lifestyle factors are increasingly being recognized for their role in most non-communicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory diseases. The science of yoga has expanded dramatically in the past few decades with the benefits of yoga being documented through the use of rigorous research across our population from multiple medical conditions to how it can help school children become better students and ultimately better adults to foster a healthier world.



Dr. Lorenzo Cohen

Yoga, a quintessential mind-body practice, when approached as a way of life, can have a profound impact on people with cancer. The state-of-science of lifestyle and yoga for people with cancer is reviewed in Dr. Lorenzo Cohen’s talk with an emphasis on past and ongoing research conducted at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. Extensive research now supports yoga’s benefits in improving overall health, quality of life, physical function, and multiple biological outcomes (immune function, hormone regulation, etc.), as well as stress resilience and ability to find meaning in the illness experience. According to the joint Society for Integrative Oncology and American Society of Clinical Oncology guidelines for the use of integrative therapies during and after breast cancer treatment, yoga is recommended for reducing anxiety as well as for improving quality of life, mood, depressive symptoms, fatigue, and sleep. Similarly, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN®) recommends patients “consider” yoga for improving some survivorship areas, such as distress, cognitive functioning, menopausal symptoms, and pain. Yoga is also formally listed in the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology as an effective intervention for cancer-related fatigue and anticipatory nausea/vomiting. Yoga plays an important role for cancer patients and caregivers alike to help improve aspects of quality of life and possibly even clinical outcomes.

Lorenzo Cohen, Ph.D., UT MD Anderson

Yoga, Breathing and Meditation Sessions for Healing

As our ongoing program aiming to improve the mental wellbeing of the survivors, IACAN hosted Spring 2021 8-week Yoga session from February to March this year. This year the Yoga program was open to the community as an intervention to alleviate stress related to the pandemic. Yoga and other comparative modalities are increasingly being administered to both cancer patients and survivors to lessen many psychosocial factors such as depression, anxiety, and stress. The sessions were conducted every Sunday at 8:00 AM via an online platform by Anjali Kanojia Ph.D., a

certified yoga instructor, the program champion, and IACAN's board member. Although the program was primarily designed for the cancer survivors, the program assessment indicated a reduction in stress among the participants who were affected by cancer as well as those who were not affected by cancer. Following are a couple of testimonies from the participants: "My heart feels deeply grateful. I appreciate and truly enjoyed being in Dr. Anjali's yoga class. Thank you to all those who are involved in organizing this wonderful program" Another participant shared, "The classes were very instructive and provided very clear instructions to continue. The instructor was extremely professional and interesting. We were glad to have participated. We would like to see these classes continue."

This free resource has been very popular in the community and IACAN will continue providing the service twice every year.

Monalisa Chandra, (IACAN)

Colorectal Cancer: Prevention, Detection, and Treatment

IACAN's second webinar this year was on colorectal cancer. On Saturday, April 28th, the webinar was presented by two eminent colorectal cancer researchers from M.D. Anderson, Dr. Arvind Dasari and Dr. Gottumukala Raju.

Colorectal Cancer (CRC), the cancer of the colon and or the rectum, is the third most diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. Although most CRCs arise sporadically, some patients are at a higher risk due to either a family history of cancer or specific familial genetic changes. Most CRCs arise from abnormal growths called polyps over 10-15 years and can be prevented by proactive screening. The American Cancer Society recommends regular screening starting at the age of 45. This can be done either with a visual exam such as a colonoscopy or a sensitive stool-based test to detect cancer. CRC patients may be asymptomatic or present with varied abdominal symptoms. Tissue biopsy, blood tests, scans to detect metastasis aid with diagnoses and staging cancer. The stage at which the cancer is first detected affects treatment regimens and survival outcomes. Depending on the stage and location (colon or rectum) of cancer, surgery, radiotherapy, systemic therapy, or a combination thereof may be administered. Surgery and radiotherapy treat localized cancers and systemic therapies such as chemotherapy and immunotherapy treat cancers that have metastasized (spread).

IACAN
UPCOMING WEBINAR!!
SATURDAY, MAY 8 2021 | 4:00PM
**COLORECTAL
CANCER
PREVENTION, DETECTION,
AND TREATMENT**

Dr. Arvind Dasari
Associate Professor in Department of
Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology
UT MD Anderson Cancer Center

Dr. Gottumukala Subba Raju
Professor in Department of
Gastroenterology,
Hepatology and Nutrition
UT MD Anderson Cancer Center

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82585344957>

Shikha Khatri (IACAN Board)

On Sunday, June 13th, IACAN celebrated Cancer Survivor's Month and International Day of Yoga 2021. IACAN was one of the first organizations in the Houston area to kick off the 2021 International Day of Yoga. IACAN celebrated the day by recognizing survivors and stressing mind-body wellness. There were two consecutive events to celebrate IDY 2021.



First, Dr. Guadalupe Palos from the MD Anderson Office of survivorship presented a talk on cancer survivors and shared statistics specifically relevant for the Indian population. Any individual diagnosed with cancer is a survivor, from the time of their initial diagnosis and for the balance of their life. "Co-survivors" often describe their family, friends, and caregivers that have assisted the cancer survivor in their survivorship journey. The scientific

advancements in cancer detection and treatments are reflected in the marked growth of American cancer survivors over time. However, the survivorship journey is not a "one size fit all". Therefore Indian-American-specific incidence, mortality, survivorship rate data need to be collected to tailor treatments to this population. Managing the survivorship experience will be unique to each individual and can be enhanced by being aware of the current knowledge in the field and the available resources. The book From Cancer Patient to Cancer survivor focuses on adult cancer survivors during the phase of care post-primary treatment and can be downloaded free at <https://www.nap.edu/download/11468#>.

The event was then followed by an hour-long yoga session, pranayama (breath exercises), and a long relaxation session that stressed healing and general wellbeing. The program participants received a goody bag courtesy of MD Anderson Cancer Center and IACAN.

On Monday, June 21st, IACAN partnered with Be The Match for a Bone Marrow drive at the India House's celebration of International Day of Yoga. In addition, IACAN hosted an online Marrow drive early this year.



Shikha Khatri & Anjali Kanojia (IACAN BOARD)

Upcoming events

August is the blood cancer awareness month. On this occasion, IACAN is hosting a multipronged education on blood cancer, treatments, and related interventions through a radio talk and a webinar. On August 14th, at 11:15 AM, our medical advisory board member, Dr. Sewa Legha will participate in a radio education on blood cancer on Meena Datt's radio show. This program will be aired on KCHN 1050 AM. You can also visit www.meenadatt.com to tune in to the program. Dr. Legha will be accompanied by a marrow donor who will share his experience on marrow donation. A webinar on stem cell research and blood cancer will be hosted on Saturday, August 21st at 3:00 PM on Zoom. Webinar details will be sent close to the event.

Mrs. Mani Sastry (Director, Nada Vinoda Music Academy) and Mr. Ravi Mukkamala will present a musical night celebrating life, health, and our brave survivors, on Saturday, September 18th, 2021.

IACAN will host the final community outreach event of the year to raise awareness on breast cancer in October, partnering with Jain Society of Houston.

Information on each program will be available on the [IACAN website](#) and [Facebook](#).