

Plugging the information gap in India

Brain tumour booklet translated into various local languages helps patients and caregivers better understand their disease

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Above: some of the languages into which a booklet for patients and caregivers on all aspects of brain tumours and its management has been translated.

INDIA is a country of diverse cultures, and people speaking different languages are scattered throughout the country. It has been estimated that there are as many as 880 languages and dialects spoken across India. Out of them, 22 languages have been recognised by the constitution of India as the most commonly spoken in different parts of the country.

The Brain Tumour Foundation of India (BTF) along with JASCAP (JEET Association for Support to Cancer Patients) - a well recognised knowledge based non-governmental organisation - jointly launched an initiative in March 2015 to translate information on brain tumours into as many languages as possible.

A booklet with all relevant information from patients and caregivers' perspectives, written in a simple easy-to-understand manner and peer reviewed by clinicians, patient representatives and social workers was initially published in English. The booklet captures information on all aspects of brain tumours and its management with the intention to create awareness and education.

With such a diverse population and varying literacy rates in India, the objective

is to get the booklets translated into other major Indian languages. With this aim the first booklet in English and Malayalam (official language of Kerala State and one of the major languages of South India) was launched at the 7th Annual Indian Society of Neuro Oncology (ISNO) conference in March 2015 held in Kochi, Kerala.

The booklet has been subsequently translated after due rigour into four more languages: Hindi (India's national and most commonly spoken language) Marathi (mainly spoken in Maharashtra and Western India) Telugu (South India) and Bengali (major language in Eastern India and Bangladesh)

The Kannada (mainly in Karnataka in South India) translated version was launched at the 9th Annual ISNO conference in March 2017 in Bangalore. Three more languages (Panjabi, Tamil and Oriya) are in different stages of translations at the moment and likely to be launched in the next few months.

Each booklet is attractively priced at Rs 50 (US \$0.75). BTF is also supporting distribution of several thousand booklets

to various centres throughout the country free of charge. It is hoped that the translated booklets will help address the information gaps in India, given its diverse cultural and literacy landscape. We aim to get translations done in all 22 major languages in due course. ■