Most cancers, including lung cancer, arise due to genetic mutations

By A Staff Reporter

Even as cases of lung cancer are rapidly rising in India due to rampant smoking, both active and passive, genetic testing and treatment with targeted therapy drugs can significantly improve the survival rate of patients, doctors said in the run-up to the 'World No Tobacco Day'.

Dr. Vidya H Veldore, Principal Scientist – Oncology with MedGenome, a leading genomics-driven research and diagnostics company said, "Most cancers, including lung cancer arise due to genetic mutations. Once the cancer-causing genetic mutation is identified through genetic testing on the tissue biopsy, doctors can administer more effective and better targeted medicines, which are known to specifically kill

the cancer cells, thus improving the clinical outcomes and preventing the side-effects of chemotherapy. There is an urgent need to create awareness about the importance of genetic testing for not only lung cancer patients but also in other cancers."

Talking about the threat to public health posed by tobacco consumption, Dr. Shailesh Bondarde, Medical Oncologist, Apex Wellness Rishikesh Hospital said, "India accounts for one-sixth of the six million tobacco-related deaths occurring around the globe every year. It is also the world's second largest tobacco consumer, where every third adult consumes some form of tobacco. The impact on public health is very high as more than 60 chemicals found in tobacco and tobacco smoke have been classified as cancer-causing agents. Tobacco-related cancer accounts for 42 per cent of all male deaths due to cancer and 18.3 per cent of all female deaths. Two most common cancers caused by tobacco are mouth cancer and lung cancer. Tobacco doesn't harm the individual alone. It also increases healthcare costs and decreases productivity."