

Best of ASTRO INDIA 2025 Conference report

The Best of ASTRO 2025 India conference was successfully conducted in Delhi under the aegis of AROI, with support from Narayana Health, and under the leadership of Dr. Kanika Sood Sharma. The two-day scientific meeting on 1st and 2nd August 2026 brought together 287 attendees and featured deliberations on multiple disease sites relevant to contemporary oncology practice.

Pre-program invitations were circulated by email across AROI, AMPI, and the Technologists Association to encourage multidisciplinary participation. The faculty was selected based on their interest and expertise in specific treatment sites, while the abstract selection process was undertaken through brainstorming discussions by the scientific committee.

The scientific sessions planned for the meeting were shared at frequent intervals through email communication as well as social media platforms, ensuring sustained academic engagement and awareness of the program. The event provided a well-structured forum for exchange of clinical knowledge, discussion of current practices, and academic interaction across specialties.

Budding trainees were also actively engaged through quiz-based activities linked to the sessions conducted during the meeting. This added an interactive educational component to the program and further enhanced trainee participation and learning.

The meeting brought together leading radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, surgeons, physicists, technologists and allied specialists for two days of high-level scientific exchange at Hotel Holiday Inn, Mayur Vihar, New Delhi.

The opening session set an engaged and forward-looking tone, with welcome addresses by the program leadership and a strong emphasis on translating international evidence into Indian practice. Dr. V. Srinivasan and Dr. Kaustav Talapatra, ASTRO India ambassadors, briefed the attendees on the joint AROI-ASTRO initiatives, including ASTRO membership waivers for students and conference license discounts.

The scientific program was then organized into disease-site sessions, each paired with panel discussions that focused not only on the results of landmark studies but also on what is immediately relevant for day-to-day clinical decision-making.

Day 1 Highlights

The first scientific block focused on breast cancer, where the agenda reflected the continuing move toward shorter treatment courses, selective dose escalation, and refined regional nodal irradiation strategies. Presentations included ultra-hypofractionation, APBI in three fractions, breast boost utility, olaparib with radiotherapy in TNBC, and randomized data such as HARVEST and NEOTRAC, followed by a panel discussion moderated by Dr Tabbasum specifically framed around which trials could change practice.

This was followed by a CNS session that highlighted evolving approaches in brain metastases, glioma, meningioma, and spine stereotactic radiosurgery. The mix of final trial results, randomized evidence, and meta-analytic data reflected a field moving toward greater precision in treatment intensity, with the panel discussion centered on the balance between precision and escalation. The moderation of the panel was conducted by Dr Indu Bansal.

A dedicated digital health innovation session highlighted how artificial intelligence, auto-contouring, digital pathology, and ctDNA are becoming increasingly integrated into radiation oncology workflows. The session covered multimodal AI biomarkers, crowdsourced contouring, automated contour quality assurance, machine-learning prediction of acute care events, and ctDNA kinetics, followed by a panel on the future of digital transformation in the specialty. The engaging panel was moderated by Dr Jyotirup Goswami.

The gastrointestinal cancer block brought together organ preservation, ctDNA-guided decision-making, dose escalation, and multimodality treatment strategies in rectal, esophageal and hepatocellular cancers. The panel discussion emphasized what is truly practice-changing and what still requires further validation before broad implementation. Dr Ashutosh Mukherji led the panel discussion.

The genitourinary session was similarly rich, with talks on SBRT versus hypofractionated IMRT in prostate cancer, lutetium-PSMA as neoadjuvant therapy, bladder adjuvant radiotherapy, long-term prostate hypofractionation outcomes, SCIMITAR, SABR for renal cell carcinoma, biomarker-stratified apalutamide trials, and ctDNA detection in bladder-preserving therapy. The discussion theme—“faster, smarter, more personalized”—captured the direction of the field well. Dr Kaustav Talapatra led the discussions of this session.

The day continued with gynecologic oncology, where the agenda highlighted rectal-sparing strategies such as PEG hydrogel, immunotherapy plus adjuvant therapy in high-risk endometrial cancer, nimotuzumab with chemoradiotherapy, and real-world hypofractionation data in cervical cancer. This was paired with a panel on integrating innovation into routine gynecologic radiation practiced Vineeta Goel led the deliberations of the session.

The first day concluded with a session on non-malignant disease, reflecting the expanding role of radiation in benign conditions. Talks included Dupuytren’s disease, stereotactic arrhythmia radiotherapy for ventricular tachycardia, and low-dose radiotherapy for knee osteoarthritis, followed by a panel asking whether benign disease indications are ready for mainstream practice. The evening inauguration and book release ceremony added a ceremonial and collegial dimension to the meeting, with addresses from senior leaders and dignitaries across oncology and healthcare. We were honored to have Dr Arti Sarin Mam, DGAFMS, as Chief Guest for the. Inaugural ceremony highlighted on the importance of the conduct of the meeting and shared that she personally has attended 5 of the seven meetings held till date.

Day 2 Highlights

The second day opened with a quiz session for residents, followed by a head and neck cancer*block that placed special emphasis on de-escalation, proton therapy, immunotherapy combinations, and biomarker-driven personalization. The presentations spanned proton beam toxicity reduction, proton versus photon comparisons, NBTXR3 with checkpoint inhibitors, DART in HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer, and KEYNOTE-689 subgroup analysis, before a panel discussion explored which evidence is truly practice-ready. The engaging discussions were led by Dr Sarbani Ghosh.

The hematological malignancies session focused on how radiation therapy is being adapted in lymphoma and CAR-T pathways. Talks included dose reduction in DLBCL/HGBL, pembrolizumab plus involved-site radiotherapy as an alternative to transplant in Hodgkin lymphoma, and bridging or consolidation radiotherapy approaches for CAR-T, followed by a discussion on where RT fits today. The discussions of the panel were led by Dr Kanika Sood Sharma

The lung and thoracic malignancy block highlighted long-term outcomes from surgery-versus-radiation trials in early-stage NSCLC, radiotherapy in small cell lung cancer brain metastases, PORT in N2 disease, consolidative RT with osimertinib, ctDNA during chemoradiation, and treatment tailoring for elderly or frail stage III NSCLC. The accompanying panel discussion clearly reflected the field's shift toward biomarker integration and individualized thoracic RT. Dr Gagan Saini led the discussions of this session.

The final major academic segment covered radiation and cancer physics, which showcased the enabling science behind modern treatment delivery. Topics included ionizing radiation acoustic imaging, detector-based image quality improvement, biologically adaptive radiotherapy, ventilation imaging for functional avoidance, 4D MRI in AVM follow-up, lymphopenia, hippocampal microstructural change, airway dose-toxicity correlation, proton therapy dosimetry, AI-assisted planning, photon-counting CT for pediatric SPR calculation, and other advanced technical developments.

The meeting concluded with a sarcoma and cutaneous tumors session that addressed sacral chordoma, melanoma microsatellitosis, and postoperative radiotherapy for Merkel cell carcinoma, ending with a final panel discussion that brought dermatology and pathology into the conversation. The session discussions were led by Dr Kuldeep Sharma.

The conference culminated with prize distribution to the quiz winners and vote of thanks delivered by Dr Kanika Sood Sharma