Northeast Cancer challenge

What is the issue?

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- Lifestyle-related cancers top the chart in the northeast region.
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- This has an overall high incidence of cancer in India.
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What is the status of cancer in north east?

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- A recent report was compiled by the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
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- Nearly 4% of the cancer cases detected in Mumbai's Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) are in patients from the northeast.
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- It shows Oesophageal cancer is the highest in men followed by cancers of the lung and stomach.
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- It also analyses a total of 37,448 cancer cases reported from 11 population-based cancer registries in the States of the northeast from 2012 to 2014.
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- Together, they form 33.5% of all cancers in the northeast among men.
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- In women, breast cancer is the highest followed by cervix and oesophageal cancer (33.8%).
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What are the reasons of the complications?

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- A feature that stands out in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura is excessive tobacco consumption.
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- People in the region are also very addicted to raw betel nut and its fermented variety.
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- Both tobacco and betel nuts are known carcinogenic substances.
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- **Oesophageal cancer** is also linked to consuming extremely hot beverages.
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- People who gulped down very hot tea (simmering temperature) were four times more prone to oesophageal cancer.
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- There are certain dietary habits that definitely play a role in the increased incidence of cancer in the region.
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- The **genetic variations** as a result of there being a large number of ethnic groups are also a contributing factor.
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- **Stomach cancer** is linked to H. pylori bacteria infection that happens due to contaminated food and water, obesity, and a diet consisting of salty or smoked foods.
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- **Breast cancer** too is linked with obesity and late pregnancies among other risk factors.
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- In **cervical cancer**, the most important risk factor is a Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection that is mainly transmitted through sexual intercourse.
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- Multiple sex partners (polyandries and polygamies societies are prevalent in North east region), a lack of hygiene and smoking are some factors linked to the spread of cervical cancers.
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What are the challenges patients are facing?

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- Most cancer patients have to travel outside the northeast for treatment and care due to an inadequate number of cancer facilities.
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- There are only about eight centres that offer various types of cancer care such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy and most of them are

in Assam.
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- Cancer cannot be treated from afar as therapy is a prolonged one.
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- Travelling in the region is not easy due to the difficult terrain and this results in a low compliance of treatment.
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Source: The Hindu

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