OralScan, a handy oral cancer screening tool launched

A handheld imaging device will soon make screening, detection, and biopsy guidance of oral cancer, a growing concern in India, easier, quicker, and simpler. The handheld oral cancer screening device called OralScan, developed by a startup Sascan Meditech incubated at TiMED, the Technology Business Incubator of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology, Thiruvananthapuram an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt. of India has been launched by Smt. K.K Shailaja, Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Govt of Kerala.

“Kerala government plans to compile a registry of cancer patients in the state as part of efforts to codify its various initiatives against the deadly disease. These kind of innovations have come forward to brace this change and also appreciating the efforts of Business incubator TIMED-SCTIMST at this time,” Smt. Shailaja said.

An online event kick-starting the product sales and distribution network was also held in the presence of dignitaries, oncologists, and channel partners identified across the country. Dr. Asha Kishore, Director, SCTIMST, performed the first sale to Mr. Ketan Parmar, Innovative India, Surat.

Oral Scan is a Make-in-India initiative with seed funding from the scheme National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) of DST. Oral scan was designed and developed entirely in India and supported by the Biotechnology ignition grant of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), INVENT (DST), and Kerala Start-Up Mission. The company recently received investment from Unicorn India Ventures.

According to Dr. Subhash Narayanan, CEO of Sascan, oral cancer is a growing concern in India, with more than 80,000 fresh cases reported each year. The disease has a high mortality rate because of the delay in detection. Current practice relies on oral examinations using torchlight to detect early-stage cancers of the oral cavity. Studies have demonstrated that this screening technique is not very reliable and often facilitates the detection of oral potentially malignant lesions (OPMLs) that go undetected in the early stages.

Even experienced clinicians find it difficult to locate the optimal site for a biopsy based on conventional oral examination. This leads to multiple biopsies, increased expenditure, and false-negative reports, which can delay diagnosis and outcome. In this context the handheld imaging device developed by Sascan for screening, detection of OPMLs, and biopsy guidance becomes relevant. A proprietary software assists the surgeon in taking a biopsy from the most appropriate site, which is likely to confirm the diagnosis of malignancy. This will avoid multiple biopsies and false negative reports. The device will be marketed at a price of Rs 5.9 Lakhs. This will be a one-time investment for hospitals and laboratories without any additional costs of consumables.

Sascan, a startup has already obtained ISO 13485 certification and CE certification. An Indian patent has been granted for the technology and US patent has been filed. OralScan has also undergone multicentric trials covering 6 hospitals across the country.
“This device is expected to have good demand in General Dentistry, Oral Medicine, Oral/Maxillofacial Pathology and surgery,” said Shri Balram, Engineer, Sree Chitra and CEO of the incubator of Sree Chitra.

![OralScan device connected to a 10-inch Tablet](image)

Left to right - Kavita Vijayan (Business Executive), Dr Ranimol Prasanna (Chief Clinical Scientist), Phebe Geroje (Junior Biomedical Engineer), Dr Subhash Narayanan (Founder & CEO), Rinoy Suvarnadas (Product Portfolio Manager), Viondkumar Damodaran (Director - Marketing).