

Pink warriors run for a cause

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CHENNAI: On a bright Sunday morning, parts of Chennai turned pink.

Senior citizens, middle-aged women, teens and cute little girls — around 6,000 of them — all sporting pink caps, ran as the city hosted Pinkathon 2014, a women's running event to raise awareness on breast cancer.

Kalpna Ramani (50), battling Lymphoma with an undeterred spirit, ran the 3-km run. She starts her next cycle of chemotherapy on Monday. "You can be back to normal even after cancer. You should just not give up. I want everyone to know this; that's why I'm here today. If I can do it, anyone can," she said.

Notwithstanding her recent knee-replacement surgery, 67-year-old Lakshmi Vishwanathan effortlessly finished her run, picked up a bottle, gulped down some water and smiled like a child. "There was no difficulty at all. All I wanted to do today was to run to spread awareness of breast cancer. That, I'm glad, was accomplished today," she said.

To exercise and stay fit may be a precautionary measure for this illness, Dr. Prithvi Mohandas, joint director of MIOT Hospitals, said. "Many women in our country do not



Over 6,000 women took part in Pinkathon 2014. (Right) Pushpa Jayapal (second from right), a 70-year-old participant, with (from left) P.V.A. Mohandas, MD, Prithvi Mohandas, joint MD, and Mallika Mohandas, Chairman, MIOT Hospitals — PHOTOS: V. GANESAN AND M. SRINATH



exercise regularly. If you do that and have low fat, the risk of breast cancer is reduced."

Milind Soman, the model-actor who was also event promoter for Pinkathon, recollected an incident where his

friend hid from him the fact that she was fighting cancer. "There is a taboo among women on talking about their body. The idea is to create a platform for women to talk about such issues," he said.

The event was flagged off at Island Grounds. Vijayalakshmi,

Abhinaya and Kiruba were winners in the 10 km, 5 km and 3 km categories respectively.