

Oral Cancer

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Abstract

Oral cancer is cancer of the oral cavity that affects the tissue of mouth or throat. Major risk factors are smoking and alcohol consumption. It includes all the structures within the cavity like tongue, lips, cheeks, hard and soft palate etc. It begins as a sore that does not heal and can be life threatening if not treated early.^{1,2}

Introduction

Oral cancer also known as oral cavity cancer. It is a type of head and neck cancer which affects physical appearance and eating. It affects different structures which include Lips, Mouth, Tongue, Inner lining of the cheeks, roof of the mouth (hard palate and soft palate), floor of the mouth or Tonsils². It is a well-known disease in some of the highly risked areas of the world like Pakistan. The main cause for oral cancer is the use of tobacco. The contributing factor in oral cancer is smoking and alcohol consumption and infection with a virus called (HPV) Human Papillomavirus and poor oral hygiene. Oral cancer is the major health problem mostly common in young males and females in present times. Oral cancer patients are increasing day by day. An

estimated 390,000 new cases of oral cancer were reported in recent years⁴. It starts as a painless sore or lump that does not heal. Oral cancer can be treated by medical approach which is aimed at removing cancer. Tumor can be eradicated from patient's body through surgery followed by radiation therapy and chemotherapy, or their combination.^{5,6} Early detection is a key to successful treatment.

Discussion

Oral cavity cancers are highly fatal. The most common type of oral cancer is squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). SCC occurs when cells become abnormal and they make a malignant tumor. It appears on various areas like gums, palate, cheek, lips etc. 90% of oral cancer are SCC. Other cancers comprise 10% of the oral cavity cancers which include minor salivary glands malignancies, sarcomas, melanoma and lymphoma⁴. Mostly cancers occur on cheek, lips, roof of mouth (hard and soft palate) and floor of mouth.¹

Clinical Presentation

During physical examinations the symptoms observed are called clinical presentation or reported by patient

that indicates disease. Clinical presentation of mouth is highly variable. Oral cancer can be diagnosed by taking sample from oral tissue. Once it is diagnosed the surgeon arranges radio-logic scans to scan the mouth of the patient.

Here is general overview:

- Bleeding Gums
- Bad Breath
- Dry Mouth
- Sores
- Pain
- Difficulty in eating
- Changing taste buds.³

Risk factors

Following are the major risk factors for development oral cancer . Use of Tobacco

- Heavy alcohol consumption
- Heavy sun exposure
- Eating a lot of paan
- HPV
- Poor oral hygiene
- Poor diet
- Weakened immune system^{1,2}

Treatments

Oral cancer is the 6th most common cancer in the world.

Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy is used at early stages to overcome the disease

Chemotherapy

Uses drugs to kill cancer cells.it destroys the cancer cell as it grows but sometimes also destroys healthy cells. It also has some side effects (like hair loss, Nausea, etc). It can be used alone or with radiation therapy or with surgery depending on the type of cancer.

Surgery

Surgery is also one of the most important steps to overcome oral cancer.^{5,6}

Conclusion

To sum up, oral cancer is a very lethal and preventable disease, but if it is caught early, it can be treated. By educating ourselves and other we can reduce the risk of oral cancer. To avoid such circumstances, regular checkups are important and taking good care of your health. by prevention and support on ongoing research we can fight against oral cancer. Oral cancer symptom usually appears in the 3rd or 4th stage therefore; regular dental checkup is a must in such circumstances⁴.

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