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A study to assess the quality of life of post-operative patients with oral cancer in BRA- IRCH, AIIMS, New Delhi

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Introduction: Cancer is a leading cause of death in both developed and underdeveloped countries in the world. The Indian subcontinent accounts for one-third of the world burden of head and neck cancer. Surgery is the standard treatment of choice for head and neck cancers. It is imperative to give supportive care to improve the quality of life.

Aim: The aim of this study was to assess the quality of life of post-operative patients with oral cancer in BRA- IRCH, AIIMS, New Delhi.

Methodology: The study was conducted at BRA- IRCH, AIIMS, New Delhi. The data was collected by convenience sampling from 50 adults, who underwent surgery for oral during June 2017 to December 2017. Standardized self-structured EORTC QOL (H&N) was used to assess the perceived level of the quality of life of post-operative patients with oral cancer during hospital stay and at one month follow up. Ethical clearance was obtained from institutional ethics committee.

Results: Eighty percent of patients were male. Common surgery was mandibulectomy (66%) and modified neck dissection (60%) regional flap reconstruction (56%). The major symptoms perceived during hospital stay were pain (98%), speech problem (84%), problem in opening mouth (82%), felt ill (80%), weight loss (74%), etc. and at one month follow up were problem in opening mouth (90.6%), pain (90.5%), speech problem (83.6%), and weight loss (82%), among many others. There was a significant decrease in the perceived pain (11.2+/-2.99) at one month follow up (9.12+/-3.42).

Conclusions: Most of the patients experience pain, problem in opening mouth, sticky saliva, speech problem, trouble in social contact, weight loss, etc.

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