

Editorial

Comparative Study to understand the Importance of Occupational Therapy, Onco Rehabilitation and Dental Prophylaxis in Head and Neck Cancer Patients

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Editorial

This comprehensive study conducted by Dr. Dibyendu Roy and the multidisciplinary team at Apex Hospital in Varanasi, India, sheds light on the significant impact of occupational therapy, onco rehabilitation and dental prophylaxis on the outcomes and quality of life for head and neck cancer patients, specifically those with buccal mucosa cancer who underwent hemimandibulectomy with pectoralis myocutaneous flap or antero lateral thigh flap.

The study's design, with two distinct groups - one receiving the comprehensive intervention and the other not availing these services during Chemo-Radiation therapy - provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the therapeutic approaches.

In group 1, where patients received occupational therapy from day 1 post-surgery, the interventions encompassed various aspects, including proper positioning, breathing exercises, respirometer use, photobiomodulation, lipomed face application, mobility exercises, modification of daily activities and dietary modifications. Furthermore, dental prophylaxis and specific exercises to address joint range of motion and lymphatic drainage were employed during chemo-radiation therapy. The results from group 1 on the 30th day post-chemo-radiation therapy were notably positive, with patients demonstrating the ability to consume liquid or semi-solid diets, minimal oral mucositis, mild xerostomia, dysgeusia and restricted joint range of motion and a Quality of Life (QoL) that was relatively unaffected (ECOG scale 1).

In contrast, group 2, which did not receive the specified interventions, experienced more severe complications. Patients were unable to consume oral diets, required Ryles tube feed, exhibited lower mouth opening, severe oral mucositis, pronounced xerostomia, dysgeusia, highly restricted joint range of motion, open sutures in some cases, poorly healed flaps, significantly compromised QoL (ECOG scale 3).

The study's conclusion emphasizes the critical role of occupational therapy, onco rehabilitation and dental prophylaxis in managing the side effects of cancer surgeries and chemo-radiation therapy. These interventions were shown to significantly improve the QoL of cancer survivors, as evidenced by the stark contrast in outcomes between the two groups.

This research, conducted at Apex Hospital in Varanasi, India, contributes valuable insights to the field of oncological care and underscores the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in enhancing the overall well-being of head and neck cancer patients.

The authors, including Dr. Dibyendu Roy, Dr. Soumyashree Samantray, Dr. Pranya Garg and Dr. Ankita Patel, provide a strong foundation for future studies and interventions aimed at optimizing the care and outcomes for this specific patient population.

Keywords: Occupational Therapy; Onco Rehabilitation; Dental Prophylaxis; Cancer Patients

Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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