

Knowledge and attitude of undergraduate students on oral cancer

Sheldon George Mathias¹, Reshmina Chandni Clara Dsouza^{2,*}, John Joseph S Martis³, Shubha N. Rao⁴,
Vinod Kumar⁵

^{1,5}Assistant Professor, ²Associate Professor, ^{3,4}Professor and Unit Head, Dept. of General Surgery, Father Muller Medical College, Mangaluru, Karnataka India

***Corresponding Author:**

Email: dsouzareshmina@gmail.com

Abstract

Introduction: Oral cancer is considered s one of the commonest cancers affecting the Indian population. In our study we studied this knowledge in the healthcare system to evaluate their knowledge regarding oral cancer. In India most often the common manseeks help of a known person or a relative in the medical field than the doctor for an initial opinion, this is possibly due to the fear and the social stigma associated with the disease. Therefore the authors of this study felt the need to educate the students well early in the course of the disease about oral cancer. So decided in the present study we decided to study the knowledge attitude and practices of undergraduate students of various health care divisions regarding oral cancer at the level of interns before they finish internship.

Materials and Methods: This was a prospective cross-sectional study conducted at the medical colleges of Karnataka. The second year students of the medical, paramedical and nursing colleges were the target population of the study. The study was conducted between 2014 December and 2017 December. There was a questionnaire consisting of various questions in regard to oral cancer which participants who were willing to part-take in the study had to fill before and after being taught regarding the disease. The data was analyzed.

Results: Among the participants the nursing professionals had a better understanding of oral cancers than the medical and paramedical students before they taught.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the lack of knowledge amongst the participants' is indicative of the fact that only a few people have effective the disease early decrease the morbidity of oral cancer.

Keywords: Oral cancer, Indian population, Undergraduate, Students, Knowledge, Attitude.

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nursing colleges were the target population of the study. The study was conducted between 2014 December and 2017 December. There was a questionnaire consisting of various questions in regard to oral cancer which participants who were willing to part-take in the study had to fill before and after being taught regarding the disease. The data was analyzed

The question are used had the following

Is oral cancer contagious?

Which gender is frequently affected by oral cancer?

Does oral cancer occur in less than 30 years of age?

Is smoking a causative factor?

Is ethanol consumption a causative factor?

Is tobacco chewing a causative factor?

Is loose tooth a causative factor?

Is sharp tooth causative factor?

Is it curable if detected early?

If you don't smoke will you get cancer?

Result

Table 1: Questionnaire

Question	Yes	No	Don't know
Is oral cancer contagious	yes (2%)	no(90%)	don't know (2%)
Which gender is frequently affected by oral cancer	both (56%)	males (35%)	females (1%)
Does oral cancer occur in less than 30 years of age	yes (15%)	no (80%)	don't know (5%)

Is smoking a causative factor	yes (85%)	no (5%)	don't know (10%)
Is ethanol consumption a causative factor	yes (65%)	no (20%)	don't know (15%)
Is tobacco chewing a causative factor	yes (90%)	no (9%)	don't know (1%)
Is loose tooth a causative factor	yes (5%)	no (0%)	don't know (95%)
Is sharp tooth causative factor	yes (18%)	no (3%)	don't know (79%)
Is it curable if detected early	yes (30%)	no (48%)	don't know (22%)
If you don't smoke will you get cancer	yes (1%)	no (90%)	don't know (9%)

Table 2: Pre-counseling the students about oral cancer and cancer prevention knowledge

Group	Yes	No
Nurses	32	18
Paramedical	21	29
Medical	35	15

Table 3: Knowledge about oral cancer screening methods

Group	Yes	No
Nurses	36	14
Paramedical	25	25
Medical	39	11

Table 4: Knowledge about counseling patients on oral cancer

Group	Yes	No
Nurses	46	4
Paramedical	8	42
Medical Interns	26	24

After the students were taught about the oral cancer, the causes, the methods of identifying it early the knowledge was equal in the three groups. Initially the first semester there was lesser knowledge and in the subsequent semesters the awareness was higher, this finding about the knowledge for oral cancers was similar to our study.

Discussion

With the westernization of the Asian continent and the stressful life many chronic diseases and cancers are steadily increasing in prevalence. Oral cancers is on rise in India.¹⁻³ The oral cavity cancer is rated as the third most common cancer in the Indian subcontinent⁴ referred to be in pandemic numbers with a wide variety of risk factors ranging from smoking a causative factor, ethanol consumption, tobacco chewing sharp tooth causative factor, poor oral health care and dietary factors

In a study done by Samara Ribeiro da Silva⁹ found that than in the first semester in the subsequent semesters the awareness was higher, this finding about the knowledge for oral cancers was similar to our study.

In a study done by Samara Ribeiro da Silva⁹ Nicotera G,¹⁰ Canto MT¹¹ found that the awareness of

ethanol consumption and smoking as the risk factors was well known, this finding about the knowledge for oral cancers was similar to our study.

Conclusion

In conclusion inadequate knowledge of oral cavity examination and the risk factors shows the need for introduction of formal training program at school/college level. The lack of knowledge among the university students is indicative of the fact that only a few people have the necessary knowledge of the risk factors of oral cancers and training programmes should be introduced at college levels in order to detect the disease and its precursors early to decrease the morbidity of oral malignancies.

Limitations

The choice of students and the number for this study were on basis of feasibility of obtaining data from them.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the constant help and support of our students throughout the duration of this project and dedicate this project to them.

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