Health-Related Quality of Life in Patients with Oral Carcinoma: a Five-Year Follow-up

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Conclusions
HRQL at diagnosis seems to be an important factor for the prognosis of both HRQL over time and survival, for patients with oral carcinoma. It should be recognized that treatment of oral carcinoma often results in long-term side effects such as dry mouth, problems with teeth and sticky saliva.

Purpose
To evaluate the health-related quality of life (HRQL) of patients with oral carcinoma in a prospective longitudinal multicenter study at diagnosis, and after one and five years in relation to tumor location and treatment modality.

Subjects and method
122 patients (mean age 61 years; 62 % males) with oral carcinoma were evaluated with standardized HRQL questionnaires; the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer, Quality of Life Questionnaire Core-30 (EORTC QLQ-C30) and the EORTC QLQ-Head and Neck Cancer Module (EORTC QLQ-H&N35).

Predictive factors
16 out of 28 scales and single items showed statistically significant better HRQL for the survivors at diagnosis compared to the patients who died 0-5 years.
11 out of 28 scales and single items showed clinically and statistically better HRQL for survivors at the one year follow-up compared to the patients who died 1-5 years.

Results
Problems with sticky saliva, teeth and dry mouth got worse between diagnosis and five years after diagnosis. Problems with dry mouth remained a great problem between one and two years after diagnosis. HRQL at diagnosis was associated with survival. Patients treated with surgery only showed lesser problems than other treatments over time.

Keywords

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