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Early detection of oral cancer- dentists' knowledge and practices in the United Arab Emirates

Objectives: The main objective of this study was to evaluate the knowledge, opinions and practices of dentists regarding early detection of oral cancer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Method: A cross-sectional study was conducted using a simple random sampling technique with a self-reported questionnaire applied to 298 dentists, working in private and public sectors in three cities (Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah) in the UAE. Dentists' knowledge about risk factors and diagnostic concepts of oral cancer, current practices and opinions as well as interest in continuing education programs were assessed.
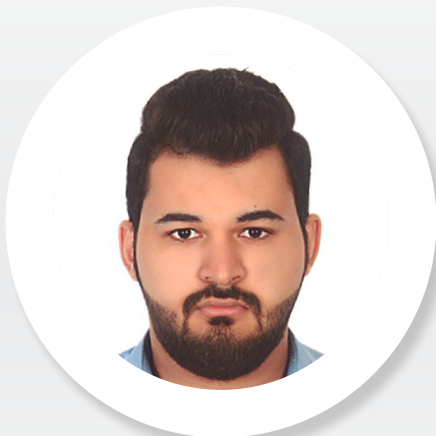
Results: The dentists, aged 23-65 years, were generally aware of the major risk factors most likely associated with oral cancer. Thirty (30) percent of the participants identified the tongue as the most common site on which oral cancer develops. The best known clinical presentation of oral cancer identified by the respondents was a persistent ulcer (87.6%). Only 30 dentists (9.9%) were comfortable in performing a biopsy in their clinic. Less than half (48.0%) had attended a continuing education course on oral cancer within the past five years. The majority of the participants (84.9%) felt that they needed further training on oral cancer detection.

Conclusion: The findings of the present study identified several deficiencies in the knowledge of dentists working in the UAE with regard to early detection of oral cancer. Some changes to dental educational and training could be made to improve the confidence and ability of dentists in this regard.

Biography

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