

## Challenges of Oral Cancer in India

**Amit Saini**

Department of Public Health and Primary Care, University of Cambridge, Forvie Site, Robinson Way, Cambridge CB2 0SR, UK

Chronic diseases such as cancer and other non-communicable diseases are fast replacing communicable diseases in India and other developing countries. Tobacco is the most important identified cause of Oral cancer followed by dietary practices, inadequate physical activity, alcohol consumption, infections due to viruses and sexual behavior. Cancer prevention includes primary and secondary prevention measures. Public education on tobacco and its health hazards recommended dietary guidelines, safe sexual practices, and lifestyle modifications form the main features of primary prevention of cancer. Incorporating screening for oral cancers into peripheral health infrastructure can have a significant effect on reducing mortality and form the mainstay for the secondary prevention measure.

### High Burden of Oral Cancer in India

Oral cancer is the most common cancer in India amongst men (11.28% of all cancers), fifth most frequently occurring cancer amongst women (4.3% of all cancers) and the third most frequently occurring cancer in India amongst both men and women.

Oral cancer is a major problem in the Indian subcontinent where it ranks among the top three types of cancer. An age-adjusted rate of oral cancer in India is high that is, 20 per 100,000 population and accounts for over 30% of all cancers in the country. The variation in incidence and pattern of the disease can be attributed to the combined effect of ageing of the population, as well as regional differences in the prevalence of disease-specific risk factors.

### Definition of Oral Cancer

Oral cancer is defined as the cancer of the lip, mouth, and tongue, to include the anatomic description of the oral cavity. This case definition is adopted, and conforms to the definitions of oral cavity cancer by the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) Coding scheme, WHO case definitions and IARC. Based on these criteria, oral cavity cancer is the 8th most frequent cancer in the world among males and 14th among females, the main risk factors being tobacco and alcohol use.

### Measurement of Disease Incidence

Cancer incidence was higher in females compared to males. The incidence in rural areas was quite low compared to urban counterparts. It is estimated that presently nearly one million new cancer cases are being detected annually in the country. In India, cancer mortality rates are under-reported due to poor recording of the cause of death.

### Future Challenges

Despite the fact that oral cancer and consequences can be prevented, treated, and controlled, there exists a significant gap in the Indian public's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Efforts must be made to introduce a suite of preventive measures that has the potential to significantly reduce the burden and to help bridge the gap between research, development and public awareness.

Keywords: Chronic diseases, oral cancer, massive, tobacco

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