Abstracts on this page have been chosen and edited by Dr Trevor Watts

ONCOLOGY

Non-smoking and non-drinking patients with head and neck squamous cell carcinoma: a distinct population

Farshadpour F, Hordijk GJ *et al. Oral Diseases* 2007; **13**: 239–243

More of these patients were female, older, and with tumours mainly in the oral cavity.

Tobacco smoke and alcohol are the two main factors implicated in head and neck squamous cell carcinomata (SCCs), tumours with a relatively poor prognosis. In this study, a Dutch university database started in 1980 was used to identify 195 non-smoking teetotallers out of 4,404 patients with head and neck SCC.

In these patients, 130 SCCs were in the oral cavity, 35 in the larynx, 17 in the oropharynx, 10 in the hypopharynx and 3 in the lip. Most SCCs were in women (73%) and median age at diagnosis was 76 yrs, whereas national data for all patients from 1989–2003 showed male preponderance (74%) and an earlier age of diagnosis (64 yrs). Site of these SCCs in all patients also differed, with most in the larynx (39%).

Second primary tumours occurred in 16% of the subjects, similar to the occurrence in subjects who smoke and drink. The authors suggest a possible clonal origin of tumours.

DOI: 10.1038/bdj.2007.466

PERIODONTOLOGY; BODY PIERCING

Lip piercing: prevalence of associated gingival recession and contributing factors. A cross-sectional study

Kapferer I, Benesch T *et al. J Periodont Res* 2007; **42**: 177–183

Lip piercing is associated with buccal recession and narrow attached gingiva.

In this cross-sectional study, 50 subjects were recruited in each of test and control groups to compare recession with and without lower lip-piercing ornaments. Groups were matched for age (21.75 yrs), gender (6% male) and smoking status (never: 18%, light: 28%, and moderate/heavy: 54%).

Mandibular anterior buccal gingival recession was present in 68% of the test group and 4% of controls ($P < 0.0001$). The amount of recession was greater in the test group ($P < 0.0001$), and width of keratinised gingiva was less ($P < 0.001$). The length of time since piercing was significantly correlated with the prevalence of recession. Groups also differed in the presence of mandibular fraena, with more in the test group. The authors note that longitudinal studies are needed to establish a causal relationship.

DOI: 10.1038/bdj.2007.468

ONCOLOGY; BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

How satisfied are head and neck cancer (HNC) patients with the information they receive pre-treatment? Results from the satisfaction with cancer information profile (SCIP)

Llewellyn CD, McGurk M *et al. Oral Oncol* 2006; **42**: 726–734

Patients who were more satisfied with information had better mood and emotional outcomes.

Satisfaction with treatment may influence long-term outcomes and UK government regulations require high quality information for cancer patients. In 4 UK hospitals, 82 newly-diagnosed HNC patients completed questionnaires before treatment, 68 of them also 1 month after treatment, and 50 6–8 months after.

Satisfaction scores with amount and content of information did not change from before to after treatment, but there was a substantial post-treatment improvement in scores for type and timing of information. The worse information deficits related to financial support, patient support groups, treatment side-effects, and effects on work and quality of life. Post-treatment depression was in part inversely related to pre-treatment satisfaction. The authors recommend tailoring information to the individual HNC patient's needs.

DOI: 10.1038/bdj.2007.467

PERIODONTOLOGY; BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

Oral health-related quality of life of periodontal patients

Cunha-Cruz J, Hujoel PP *et al. J Periodont Res* 2007; **42**: 169–176

Oral health-related quality of life (OHQoL) was inversely related to the number of periodontal problems.

Periodontitis may lead to tooth mobility, aesthetic problems, tooth loss, eating difficulties and pain. In this study, 1,497 of 3,617 patients attending for initial examination by a periodontal specialist agreed to complete a questionnaire subsequently (ages 35–89 yrs, 51% female).

Subjects with worse perceived oral health were significantly more likely to have 9 or more teeth with PD > 5 mm (adjusted OR: 2.8), 3+ teeth with PD > 8 mm (3.2), or missing teeth (4–7 teeth: 1.7; 8–11: 2.5; 12+: 2.6). Denture discomfort was commoner in patients with more missing teeth, and almost 20% of patients had one or more OHQoL problems. The authors comment that if further studies confirm their findings, the perception of periodontitis as a 'silent' condition may change.

DOI: 10.1038/bdj.2007.469