



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Dentistry**

**AWARENESS OF ORAL CANCER AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS.**

**KEY WORDS:** oral cancer, carcinoma, oral carcinoma

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Oral cancer is one of the life threatening disease, early diagnosis of which will greatly increase the probability of cure and survival rate. The medical students who will be soon playing an important role in prevention and detection of oral cancer should have sufficient knowledge of the disease to prevent and minimize the risk of oral cancer. **Aim:** The aim of the study is to evaluate the awareness of oral cancer among first year medical students. **Methodology:** A questionnaire with ten structured questions were prepared and distributed among 200 first year MBBS Students. The questionnaire included questions regarding the general awareness, risk factors, prevention, detection, source of information and their interest in gaining more information, which was later evaluated. **Results:** A total of 200 students participated in the study. The result of awareness questionnaire showed that 80% of the respondents were aware of oral cancer and the risk factors associated with it. But, 78% does not have sufficient knowledge regarding the prevention and detection of oral cancer. 72% of the students depends on media as the source of information and 95% of the students have chosen information packs, lectures and seminars to be an alternative source of better information.

**INTRODUCTION**

Oral cancer is one of the major health issue that the world is facing today. It is the sixth most common cancer globally<sup>[1]</sup> Most of the cases are reported from the developing countries like India, Bangladesh, Taiwan and Sri Lanka. 80% of oral cancers develop from tobacco use although other factors like ill fitting dentures, human papilloma virus, alcohol can also contribute to the development of cancer<sup>[2]</sup> Oral cancer is most preventable as it is easily accessibility for examination. But the prognosis of oral cancer is poor in spite of advancements in treatment modalities. There is less than 50% survival rate within a five year period. The major reasons for delayed diagnosis and low survival rate is lack of awareness of the risk factors and the signs and symptoms associated with the development of oral cancer and **chronic** high-risk habits of the people.<sup>[3]</sup>

The aim of the study is to evaluate the awareness of oral cancer among first year medical students of Kamineni Institute of Medical Sciences, Narketpally, Nalgonda dist, Telangana. The medical students who will play an important role in the health care sector is evaluated for basic knowledge of oral cancer like the risk factors associated with it, it's clinical appearance, and preventive measures. It is anticipated that the findings from this study will help to create more awareness among young students who can contribute to early detection and prevention of oral cancer.

**MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The study was conducted among first year medical students of Kamineni Institute of Medical Sciences, Narketpally, Nalgonda dist, Telangana. A structured closed ended questionnaire with ten questions were prepared in English.

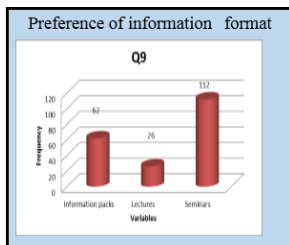
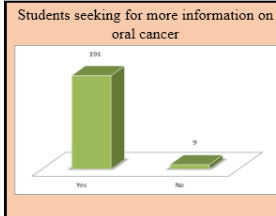
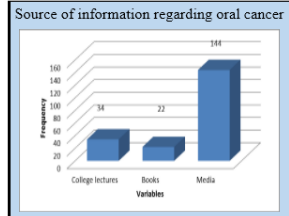
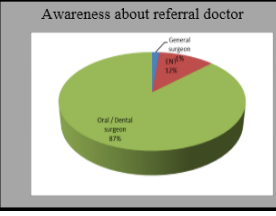
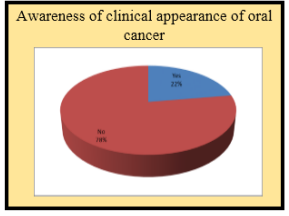
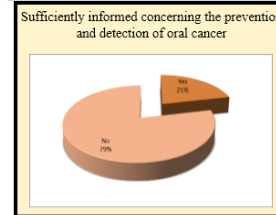
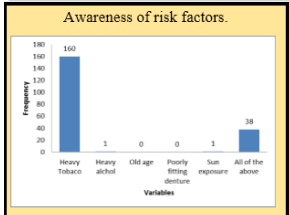
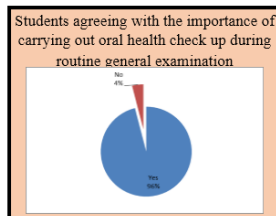
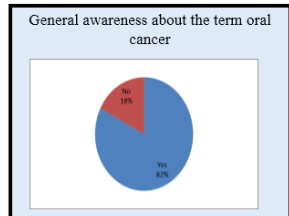
**The questions include:**

1. Do you know about oral cancer?
2. Do you think it is important to carry out the oral health check up of a patient on routine general examination?
3. What do you consider as risk factor for oral cancer
4. Do you think you are adequately informed regarding the clinical appearance of oral cancer?
5. where would you refer a patient if you suspect an oral cancer?
6. From what source did you gain knowledge regarding oral cancer?
7. Do you feel that you have sufficient knowledge concerning prevention and detection of oral cancer?
8. Would you like more information or teaching on oral cancer?
9. which format would you prefer
10. After graduation will you advise the patients and create awareness about the risk factors for oral cancer

The questionnaire was distributed among 200 first year MBBS Students. The questionnaire included questions regarding the general awareness, risk factors, clinical appearance of the lesion, health care providers, prevention, detection, source of information and their interest in gaining more information. The responses to these questions were evaluated.

**RESULT**

A total of 200 students participated in the study. The result of awareness questionnaire showed that 80% of the respondents were aware of oral cancer and the risk factors associated with it. But, 78% does not have sufficient knowledge regarding the prevention and detection of oral cancer. 72% of the students depends on media as the source of information and 95% of the students would like to have more information through information packs, lectures or seminars.



the study done by Park *et al*, should be addressed as it could lead to limited insights to disease processes and medical ignorance. Although 80% of the students are aware of the general term and major causative factor, they are unaware of the multiple factors contributing to the disease and their clinical presentations, which aids in early diagnosis and also regarding the preventive measures. This signifies a deficiency in medical education

**CONCLUSION**

The awareness study conducted among medical students reveal that even though the students are aware of the causative agents of the disease they lack awareness concerning the prevention and detection of oral cancer and the necessity of creating more awareness among the medical students which will create better practitioners who can be pivotal in prevention and early diagnosis of oral cancer.

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**DISCUSSION**

Oral cancer is one of the most prevalent disease with variable clinical presentations and multiple causative factors. Prevention and early diagnosis of the disease is of utmost importance as it will greatly increase the probability of cure and survival rate. <sup>[4]</sup>The proportion of oral cancer cases diagnosed at an early and localized stage is still less than approximately 50% in India. <sup>[1]</sup>

The medical students are expected to have sufficient information concerning the etiological agents, the initiating factors and the progress of the disease ,which will help in creating awareness among general population which will minimize the risk of development of oral cancer. Various steps are taken as a control programme to ensure prevention of oral cancer involving health professionals and primary health care personnel with relevant training in oral health in detection, early diagnosis and treatment of oral cancer. <sup>[9]</sup>

In our study we have evaluated the ability of the medical students in the initial period of their professional course for the awareness of the basics of oral cancer. The results of the present study indicates the lack of awareness and requirement of including more structured awareness in the medical curriculum. There is a necessity to create more awareness among students in the form of seminars and lectures. Mass media playing a major role as the source of information on oral cancer (72%) which is in accordance with