

30. Pre and post radiotherapy considerations for achieving sustained oral health in head and neck cancer patients

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Introduction: Radiotherapy (rt) plays a vital role in the management of head and neck cancer and is utilised

as a primary treatment modality, adjunct to surgery, in combination with chemotherapy, and as palliation. Subsequent to treatment, these patients are prone to a variety of short and long term dental complications and extensive unmet treatment needs. Multiple strategies for prevention and management of such complications are being proposed, however, lack of concrete evidence makes the treatment approach ambiguous as well as controversial. This presentation aims to highlight the complications frequently encountered in patients undergoing rt, the important role a prosthodontist can play in the overall oral health management in cancer survivors, and update on the comprehensive strategy to approach the treatment in patients undergoing radiotherapy and achieve a sustainable oral health and acceptable quality of life. Preliminary results of a randomized clinical trial being conducted at our centre are presented to support the treatment proposed with evidence. 260 patients have been recruited in the study so far and initial results have been encouraging with respect to mouth opening, radiation caries and salivary parameters.

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