Prevalence of patient-reported dysphagia and oral complications in cancer patients

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### Faculty Disclosure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>No, nothing to disclose</th>
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Background

Dysphagia and oral complications resulting from cancer and cancer therapies may be underreported, under-recognised, and undertreated

[Epstein, 2012; Raber-Durlacher, 2012]
AIM

To determine the prevalence of patient-reported dysphagia and oral complications in all cancer patients across all treatment settings, and to examine relationships between cancer types, oral complications and dysphagia.
METHODS

Cross-sectional study design
Vanderbilt Head and Neck Symptom Survey (v 2.0) [Cooperstein, 2012]

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cancer Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haematology</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H&amp;N</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynaecology</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper GI</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorectal</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin/Melanoma</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft tissue</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Note: N = 239, N = 54 (23%), N = 51 (21%), N = 134 (56%).*
RESULTS: Prevalence of Dysphagia

- Any dysphagia
- Dysphagia for liquids
- Dysphagia for solids

Bar chart showing the percentage of patients with dysphagia for solids and liquids, with a distinction between Non-H&N and H&N categories.
Prevalence of dysphagia by tumour type

- H&N
- Lung
- Bone & soft tissue
- Upper GI
- Colorectal
- Skin/melanoma
- Haematology
- Gynaecology
- Breast
- Other*

* CNS, genitourinary, urology, UKP
Dysphagia severity

Of the patients who reported swallowing problems:
Prevalence of oral complications

- Difficulty with teeth/dentures
- Mouth/throat pain
- Thick phlegm
- Smell changes
- Voice changes
- Xerostomia
- Taste changes

$r_s = .488$
DISCUSSION

DYSPHAGIA

ORAL COMPLICATIONS

Pharyngeal weakness

Tumour invasion

Nerve compression

Age

Medications

Pre-morbid conditions

De-conditioning
CONCLUSIONS

Complications are unavoidable: ↑ awareness and recognition

Dysphagia and oral complications are prevalent in cancer patients

Symptoms often co-exist: symptom clusters

Further research: patient-reported outcomes