

HPV positive oropharyngeal cancer: risky sexual behavior and the role of health care practitioners

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ABSTRACT: Oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinomas (OPSCC) has traditionally been associated with tobacco and alcohol use. Although smoking rates had been decreasing, there has been a increase in the incidence of OPCSS. This increase of OPCSS is noticed in one specific type, OPSCC associated with human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, mainly the HPV16 type, a high-risk HPV. Transmission of HPV is known as occur through sexual contact but many researches differ on which kind of sexual contact is the responsible for the HPV infeccion. This article is a literature review of articles that discuss the risk factors for OPSCC HPV positive and the role of health care practitioners in this matter. As a result of this study, could be stabilished that the habits most associated with OPSCC are oral sex and multiples sexual partners. The occurrence of this habits in the population varies from local culture, social status and ethnic group. In this context, health care professionals have a major responsibility in orientating about aspects of the disease, risk factors, vaccination and prognosis. Further researches are necessary to clarify the role of vaccination for HPV in future changes in the OPSCC prevalence.

Keywords: Oropharyngeal cancer; HPV; Human papillomavirus; Sexual behavior.