

Approaching the oral pathology to primary care dentists through Telepathology in the Health Service of Concepción.

Patricio Rubio^{1,2} & Cesar Merino.³

Affiliations: ¹Hospital Guillermo Grant Benavente, Concepción, Chile. ²Facultad de Odontología, Universidad San Sebastián, Concepción, Chile. ³Servicio de Salud Concepción, Chile.

Corresponding author: Patricio Rubio. Lientur 1457. Concepción, Chile. Phone: (56-41) 2487547. E-mail: jpatricio.rubio@gmail.com

Teledentistry at the international level has demonstrated multiple benefits. However, it is an in-progress area, especially in developed countries.¹ We have found several applications for this technology in oral pathology, reaching a diagnostic accuracy of 88% in some cases.² The application of oral Telepathology has reduced waiting lists with an adequate prioritization of the most complex cases and the attention of the less complex cases directly in primary care centers, under the supervision of specialists. This model had a 90% acceptance among patients and professionals.³

Oral cancer generates a tremendous impact on the patient due to its aesthetic, functional, psychological and economic consequences. Oral cancer is preventable in most cases, but late consultation hinders an early diagnosis.⁴

The aim of Oral Telepathology in the Health Service of Concepción is to provide advice to primary care centers and smaller hospitals, as well as to improve the research of the most frequent oral diseases. This strategy focuses on the early detection of oral cancer in order to reduce its impact on patients and health costs. It also includes the implementation of prevention and healthy lifestyles programs that are developed alongside the target population.⁵

To implement this healthcare model, a digital platform where the cases are stored was developed. There have also been update courses in oral pathology and the use of the platform for tele-consultant dentists. Finally, face-to-face advice on the primary care centers was included to strengthen the model. Above all this program has had a high degree of acceptance from both patients and dentists.

We hope to soon share the positive results that have been obtained during these few months of operation of the program, and to demonstrate that it is possible to develop it at the national level, bringing oral pathology closer to primary care dentists.

REFERENCES.

1. Cartes-Velásquez R, Bustos-Leal A. Teleodontología: Conceptos, experiencias y proyecciones. *Odontoestomatología*. 2012;14(20):17–25.
2. Torres-Pereira C, Possebon RS, Simões A, Bortoluzzi MC, Leão JC, Giovanini AF, Piazzetta CM. Email for distance diagnosis of oral diseases: a preliminary study of teledentistry. *J Telemed Telecare*. 2008;14(8):435–8.
3. Berndt J, Leone P, King G. Using teledentistry to provide interceptive orthodontic services to disadvantaged children. *Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop*. 2008;134(5):700–6.
4. Grant E, Silver K, Bauld L, Day R, Warnakulasuriya S. The experiences of young oral cancer patients in Scotland: symptom recognition and delays in seeking professional help. *Br Dent J*. 2010;208(10):465–71.
5. Jacobson JJ, Epstein JB, Eichmiller FC, Gibson TB, Carls GS, Vogtmann E, Wang S, Murphy B. The cost burden of oral, oral pharyngeal, and salivary gland cancers in three groups: commercial insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid. *Head Neck Oncol*. 2012;4:15.

Conflict of interests: None.

Acknowledgements: None.

Cite as: Rubio P & Merino C. Approaching the oral pathology to primary care dentists through Telepathology in the Health Service of Concepción. *J Oral Res* 2017; 6(2): 34. doi:10.17126/joralres.2017.009