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2512 Perception amongst dental professionals on potentially-malignant lesions and oral cancer

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Objectives: There exist no data on the attitudes and knowledge of the risk factors, diagnosis, investigations and referral of potentially malignant lesions (PML) and oral malignancy (OM) amongst Hong Kong dentists. Methods: Questionnaire survey amongst a sampled cohort representing the dentists and specialists. Results: 235 respondents comprising 161 dentists (69%), 74 specialists (31%), 180 males (77%) and 55 females (23%); median age of 40 (range, 25-65 years) and in practice for 1 to 44 years (median, 15 years). 80% of the respondents never attended any course on OM and 23% used internet, journals (7%) and only 50% ever used any institution for updating their knowledge since graduation. Most frequent malignancies seen in practice include squamous cell carcinoma (SCC, 51%), ameloblastoma (25%), salivary gland (15%) and lymphoma (9%) and PML such as leukoplakia (69%), erythroplakia (21%), submucous fibrosis (9%). Only 10% (52% specialists and 48% dentists) ever carried out biopsy of PML. Common site of SCC thought to be lateral tongue (74%), floor (67%), ventral tongue (34%), buccal mucosa (29%), lower lip (27%), hard palate (12%), and upper lip (11%). Common features of SCC believed to be no pain (53%), tooth mobility (22%), pathological fracture (16%), dysphagia (26.8%), dysphonia (13%), and dysarthria (10%) and most likely causes as tobacco (92%) but only 57% considered alcohol, other include, previous OM (37%), poor oral hygiene (27%), HIV (21%), candidosis (20%), syphilis (17%), leukaemia (11%), and viruses such as EBV (17%), HPV (11%) and HSV (3%). 11% (25) never examined the oral mucosa while 64% routinely but 3% never referred a PML immediately to a specialist but 80% were aware of the options and 20% (48) gave any advice on smoking. Conclusions: Considerable gaps exist in perceptions towards PML and OM. This warrants urgent continuing education programmes amongst the dental practitioners in Hong Kong.

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