

An Evidence-Based Approach to the Management of Nasopharyngeal Cancer

From Basic Science to Clinical Presentation and Treatment

Edited by

Baharudin Abdullah
Anusha Balasubramanian
Norhafiza Mat Lazim



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Dedication

Baharudin Abdullah

To my loving wife, Dr. Eka Sumianti, who has always been patient with me and my two beautiful girls, Clarissa Andini and Carneisha Aleeya. I will always love and cherish you all until the end of time.

Anusha Balasubramanian

To my beloved parents, husband, godparents, teachers, patients, colleagues and friends; thank you for guiding me through the path of life, I remain eternally grateful and indebted to you. God bless.

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Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	xiii
<i>About the editors</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgment</i>	xix
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
<i>William Ignace Wei and Raymond K. Tsang</i>	
Historical aspect	1
Geographical distribution and familial clustering	3
Association with Epstein–Barr virus	4
Improvement in treatment outcomes in the last five decades	5
Conclusion	8
References	8
Chapter 2 Risk factors and etiopathogenesis of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	11
<i>Norhafiza Mat Lazim and Baharudin Abdullah</i>	
Introduction	11
Interaction between the risk factors and pathogenesis of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	24
Association between stages of nasopharyngeal carcinoma at diagnosis with risk factors of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	25
Implications for the management of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	25
Epstein–Barr virus as a screening biomarker	26
How to identify and reduce risk	26
Conclusion	27
References	27
Further reading	30

Chapter 3	Genetics of nasopharyngeal carcinoma and molecular signaling pathways	31
	<i>Murtala B. Abubakar and Siew Hua Gan</i>	
	Genomic and epigenetic landscapes of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	31
	List of abbreviations	48
	References	50
	Further reading	65
Chapter 4	Surgical anatomy of the nasopharynx	67
	<i>Ing Ping Tang, Prepageran Narayanan and Zul Izhar Mohd. Ismail</i>	
	Introduction	67
	Surgical anatomy of nasopharynx	67
	Important surgical adjacent structures	69
	Conclusion	72
	References	72
Chapter 5	Pathology classification of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	73
	<i>Sharifah Emilia Tuan Sharif, Norzaliana Zawawi, Aidy Irman Yajid, Norasnieda Md Shukri and Irfan Mohamad</i>	
	Introduction	73
	The evolved history of nasopharyngeal carcinoma pathology classifications	73
	WHO classifications	75
	Histomorphological features of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	82
	Ancillary studies	86
	Nasopharyngeal carcinoma diagnostic problems	89
	Conclusions	90
	Acknowledgment	90
	References	91

Contents

Chapter 6	Clinical presentation of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	93
	<i>Marlinda Adham, Norhafiza Mat Lazim and Roman Carlos</i>	
	Introduction	93
	Four groups of clinical signs and symptoms of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	98
	Sign and symptoms related to extension of disease out of the nasopharynx	103
	Conclusion	106
	References	106
	Further reading	109
Chapter 7	Assessment and staging of nasopharyngeal carcinoma	111
	<i>Karman Ka Ying Leung and Michael Chi Fai Tong</i>	
	Assessment	111
	Staging	128
	Summary and concluding remarks	132
	References	132
Chapter 8	Laboratory investigation for nasopharyngeal carcinoma diagnosis	141
	<i>Mai Abdel Haleem Abu Salah, Hasnan Jaafar and Chan Yean Yean</i>	
	Introduction	141
	Epstein–Barr virus serology	145
	Histopathological evaluation	150
	Application of brush cytology versus tissue biopsy	157
	Conclusion	160
	References	161
Chapter 9	Open surgical salvage procedures for nasopharyngeal carcinoma	167
	<i>Raymond K. Tsang</i>	
	Introduction	167

Assessment of nodal failures of nasopharyngeal carcinoma for surgical salvage	182
Neck dissection for salvaging nodal failures in nasopharyngeal carcinoma	183
Reirradiation of the neck with brachytherapy after neck dissection	183
References	185
Chapter 10 Radiation therapy and chemotherapy in early and advanced nasopharyngeal cancer	189
<i>Francis Ho and Gokula Kumar Appalanaido</i>	
Principles of radiation therapy	189
Intensity modulated radiotherapy plan approval	194
Types of radiation therapy specifically including intensity modulated radiotherapy in nasopharyngeal cancer	194
Role of radiation in early disease	197
Management of the neck	198
Complications of radiation	200
Reirradiation in nasopharyngeal cancer recurrence	203
Treatment of locally advanced disease	204
Systemic therapy	212
Role of radiation in metastatic disease	217
Conclusion	219
References	221
Further reading	227
Chapter 11 Role of endoscopic endonasal surgery in recurrent nasopharyngeal carcinoma: endoscopic endonasal transpterygoid nasopharyngectomy	229
<i>Ing Ping Tang and Prepageran Narayanan</i>	
Introduction	229
Patient selection	230
Preoperative workup	230

Contents

Surgical technique	231
Postoperative care and complications	238
Conclusion	239
References	239
Chapter 12 Nasopharyngeal carcinoma screening and prevention programs	241
<i>Anusha Balasubramanian and Norhafiza Mat Lazim</i>	
Introduction to screening	241
Rationale for screening	241
Epstein–Barr virus serology as a screening tool	242
Epstein–Barr virus DNA for screening	244
Nasendoscopy	244
Circulating biomarkers	245
Effectiveness of screening	245
Rationale for prevention	246
High-risk group	246
Education programs targeting dietary habits	248
Low-risk groups	249
General population-based programs	249
Conclusion	250
References	251
Further reading	253
Chapter 13 Survival rates and quality of life of nasopharyngeal carcinoma patients	255
<i>Norhafiza Mat Lazim, Giacomo Spinato, Kahairi Abdullah and Paolo Boscolo-Rizzo</i>	
Introduction	255
Survival rates of nasopharyngeal carcinoma patients	256
Effect of patient-related factors	264
Effect of treatment-related factors	265

Effect of addition of chemotherapy on quality of life	266
Effect of surgery on quality of life	267
Quality of life as prognostic marker in patients with nasopharyngeal cancer	268
Conclusion	271
References	271
Further reading	276
Chapter 14 New developments in nasopharyngeal cancer	277
<i>Ing Bing Tan, Norhafiza Mat Lazim, Sharon D. Stoker and Maarten A. Wildeman</i>	
Early diagnosis by Epstein–Barr virus biomarkers	277
Imaging modality of nasopharyngeal cancer	279
Treatment of nasopharyngeal cancer	281
Primary treatment for nasopharyngeal cancer	282
New emerging treatments in nasopharyngeal cancer	285
Local failures in nasopharyngeal cancer	287
Surgical treatment of recurrent or persistent nasopharyngeal cancer	288
Photodynamic therapy in nasopharyngeal cancer	289
Photodynamic therapy versus surgery and radiotherapy for local failures of nasopharyngeal cancer	290
Immunotherapy for nasopharyngeal cancer	291
Conclusion	292
References	292
Further reading	299
<i>Index</i>	301



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Surgical anatomy of the nasopharynx

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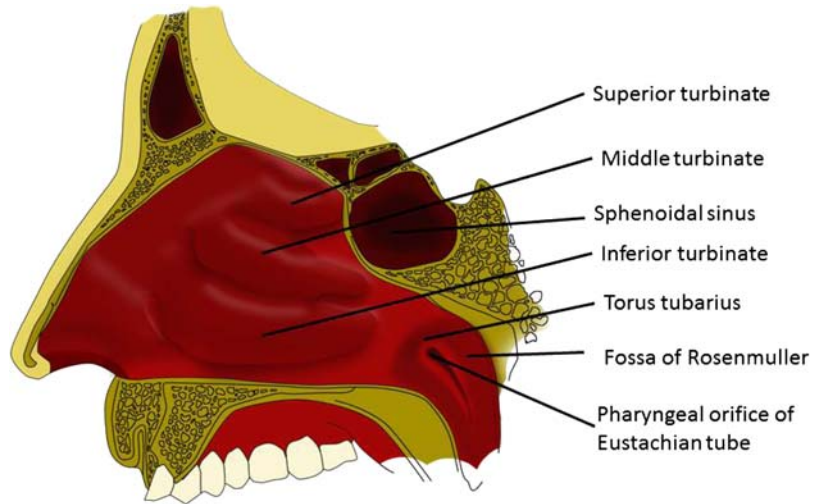
Introduction

The pharynx is a conical fibromuscular tube that forms the upper part of the air and food passages. It is approximately 14 cm long and extends from the base of the skull to the lower border of the cricoid cartilage where it becomes continuous with the esophagus. The pharyngeal wall consists of four layers. They are the mucous membranes, pharyngobasilar fascia, muscular coat, and buccopharyngeal fascia. Anatomically, the pharynx is divided into the nasopharynx, oropharynx, and laryngopharynx.

Surgical anatomy of nasopharynx

The nasopharynx lies posterior to the nasal cavities in between the floor of the sphenoid sinus and the soft palate. It has a roof, a floor, an anterior wall, a posterior wall, and lateral walls. The roof is supported by the body of the sphenoid and the basilar part of the occipital bone. A collection of lymphoid tissue, called the pharyngeal tonsil, is present in the submucosa of this region. The floor is formed by the sloping upper surface of the soft palate. The pharyngeal isthmus is the opening in the floor between the free edges of the soft palate and the posterior pharyngeal wall. The posterior wall forms a continuous sloping surface with the roof. It is supported by the anterior arch of the atlas. The anterior wall is formed by the posterior nasal apertures, separated by the posterior edge of the nasal septum (Snell, 1992). Located on each side of the lateral wall is the pharyngeal orifice of the Eustachian tube. It is bounded posterosuperiorly by a mucosal elevation called the torus tubarius. It is an elevation formed by the cartilage of the Eustachian tube. Located superior and posterior of the tubal

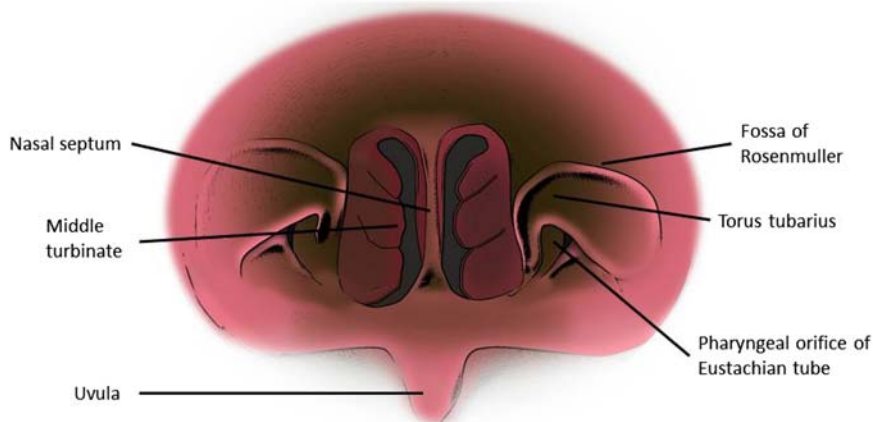
Figure 4.1
Schematic diagram illustrating the lateral wall of the right nasal cavity and nasopharynx.



elevation is a recess called the fossa of Rosenmuller. There is a mucosal ridge extending from the inferior end of the torus tubarius to the lateral pharyngeal wall. This mucosal ridge is called the salpingopharyngeal fold. It is a mucosal fold formed by the salpingopharyngeus muscle (Dhingra, 2008) (Fig. 4.1).

The fossa of Rosenmuller is a bilateral projection of the nasopharynx just inferior to the skull base. It is also called the lateral pharyngeal recess or simply the pharyngeal recess. The fossa is covered by nasopharyngeal mucosa and is the most common site of origin of nasopharyngeal carcinoma. It is lined by pseudostratified ciliated columnar epithelium with goblet cells. It is located posterior to the torus tubarius, a prominence caused by the medial cartilaginous end of the Eustachian tube (Gray, 1918). The torus tubarius is larger on the superior and posterior lips of the Eustachian tube, effectively hiding the fossa (Fig. 4.2). The fossa extends through a defect between the fibers of the superior constrictor muscle and the base of the skull. The fibers of the superior constrictor muscle project from multiple parts of the lower oropharynx to the skull base, but the fibers only reach the skull base at the midline. The lateral defect, called the sinus Morgagni, is covered by a fibrous band known as the nasopharyngeal aponeurosis. Therefore the boundaries of the fossa of Rosenmuller are defined anteriorly by the Eustachian tube and the levator veli palatini muscle, posteriorly by the posterior wall of the nasopharynx and the retropharyngeal space, laterally by the parapharyngeal space and the tensor veli palatini muscle, and inferiorly by the upper edge of the superior constrictor muscle. The fossa's superior boundary is formed by the skull base with its various openings and prominences, including the foramen spinosum, the carotid canal, foramen lacerum, and foramen ovale. From its opening in the lateral nasopharynx, the fossa projects laterally posterior to the pharyngeal orifice of the Eustachian tube. At the apex of the fossa of

Figure 4.2
Anterior view of the nasopharynx as seen with a laryngoscope, depicting the fossa of Rosenmuller.



Rosenmuller, only a thin layer of fibroconnective tissue separates the mucosa from the cervical internal carotid artery (Amene et al., 2013).

The arterial supply of the nasopharynx is derived from branches of the ascending pharyngeal, the ascending palatine, the facial, the maxillary, and the lingual arteries. The veins drain into the pharyngeal venous plexus, which in turn drains into the internal jugular vein.

The nerve supply of the nasopharynx is mainly from the pharyngeal plexus. This plexus is formed from the branches of the glossopharyngeal, vagus, and sympathetic nerves. The sensory nerve supply of the mucous membrane of the nasal part of the pharynx is mainly from the maxillary nerve. The motor nerve supply is derived from the cranial part of the accessory nerve, which, via the branch of the vagus to the pharyngeal plexus, supplies all the muscles of the pharynx except the stylopharyngeus, which is supplied by the glossopharyngeal nerve (Snell, 1992).

The lymphatic drainage of the nasopharynx, including those of the adenoids and pharyngeal end of the Eustachian tubes, drain into upper deep cervical nodes either directly or indirectly through the retropharyngeal and parapharyngeal lymph nodes. They also drain into the spinal accessory chain of nodes in the posterior triangle of the neck. Lymphatics of the nasopharynx may also cross the midline to drain into contralateral lymph nodes.

Important surgical adjacent structures

The infratemporal fossa (ITF) is an anatomical space located under the floor of the middle cranial fossa, posterior to the maxilla, medial to the ramus of the mandible, and lateral to the nasopharynx. The greater wing of the sphenoid

bone and the subtemporal surface of the temporal bone form the roof of the ITF. The lateral pterygoid plate along with the Eustachian tube forms its medial wall. The temporalis muscle attaching to the mandibular ramus and the temporomandibular joint form its lateral border (Fig. 4.3). The infratemporal fossa communicates with the pterygopalatine fossa (PPF) via the pterygomaxillary fissure, which is continuous with the inferior orbital fissure medially (Hosseini et al., 2012). It contains the parapharyngeal and masticator spaces. The styloid diaphragm, formed by the stylopharyngeal aponeurosis, separates the parapharyngeal space into pre- and poststyloid compartments. The prestyloid compartment is a narrow and fat-containing space between the medial pterygoid and the tensor veli palatini muscles. The poststyloid compartment contains the internal carotid artery, internal jugular vein, and lower cranial nerves (9th to 12th). The masticator space contains the masseter muscle, medial and lateral pterygoid muscles, the tendon of the temporalis muscle, the internal maxillary artery, the mandibular branch of the trigeminal nerve, the tensor and levator veli palatini muscles, the styloid diaphragm, and the Eustachian tube (Falcon et al., 2011; Fernandes, Lobo, Castro, Oliveira, & Som, 2013) (Fig. 4.4).

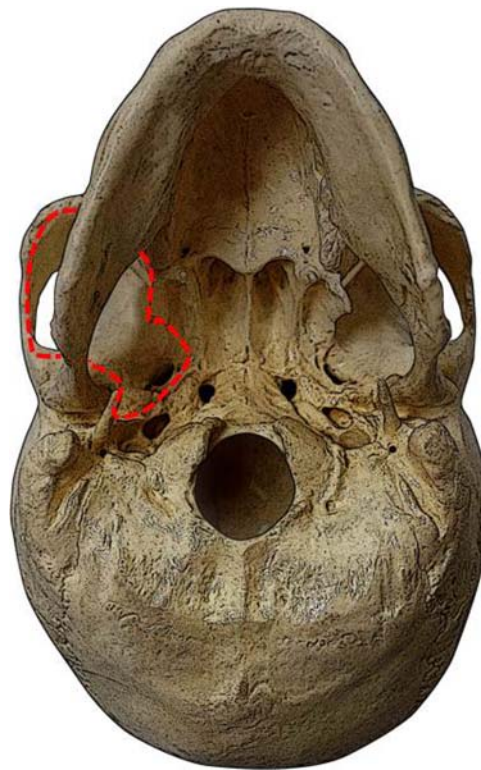
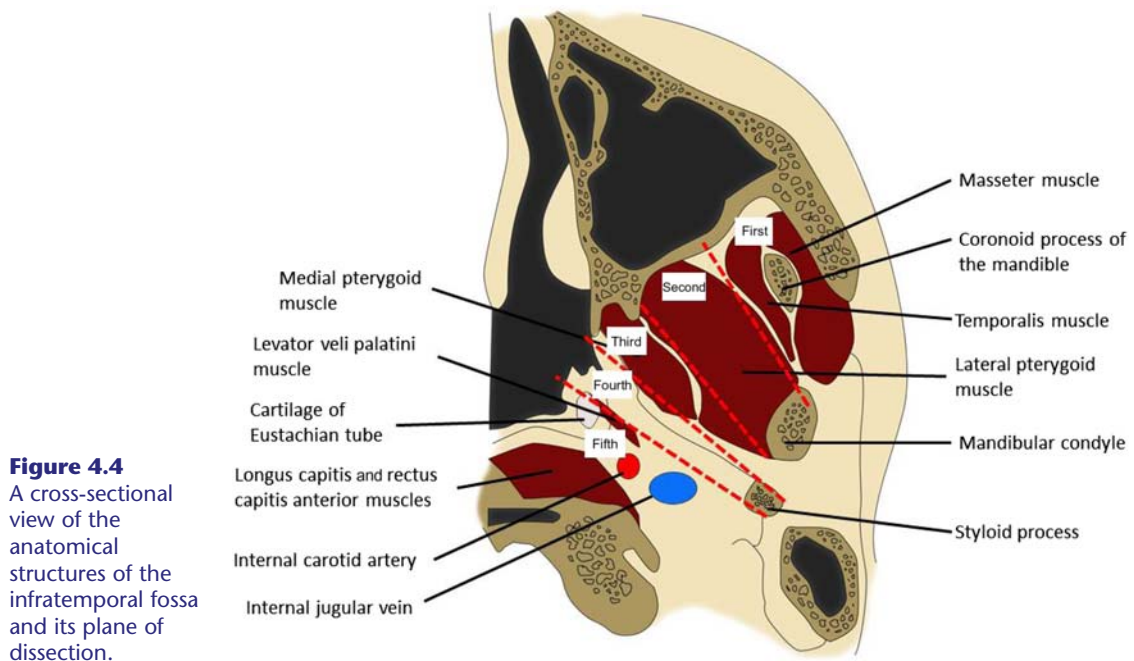


Figure 4.3
Inferior view of the base of skull. The boundary of infratemporal fossa is delineated by the dotted line.



The ITF is defined in five planes of dissection, as we dissect from superficial to deep planes. The first plane of dissection lies between the lateral pterygoid muscle medially and the deep part of the temporalis muscle and mandibular ramus laterally. The second plane of dissection consists of the lateral pterygoid muscle. The third plane of dissection is located posterior to the lateral pterygoid plate, medial to the middle meningeal artery and mandibular nerve, and extends laterally to the temporomandibular joint. The fourth plane of dissection lies between the medial pterygoid and the tensor veli palatine muscles. The fifth plane of dissection lies in the poststyloid parapharyngeal space and contains the internal carotid artery (Hosseini et al., 2012).

The PPF is a pyramidal space limited by the pterygoid plates posteriorly, the palatine bone anteromedially, and the maxilla anterolaterally. The anterior compartment of the PPF contains the third portion of the internal maxillary artery and its terminal branches, whereas the posterior compartment contains the maxillary division of the trigeminal nerve and the sphenopalatine ganglion and its branches. The pterygomaxillary fissure forms the boundary as well as communication between the PPF and the infratemporal fossa. The fissure is also continuous with the infraorbital fissure. This portion of the infraorbital nerve delineates the border between the ITF and the PPF (Falcon et al., 2011) (Fig. 4.4).

Conclusion

Surgical anatomy of the nasopharynx and adjacent structures is essential for understanding the diseases of this region and especially for planning of surgical interventions at the nasopharynx.

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