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Literary Review



September to November 2017

Title	Publication	Date	Overview
Symptoms of patients with head and neck cancers undergoing radiotherapy	European Journal of Cancer Care, Vol. 26, No. 6, pages 1-8.	November	Results of a study showed that patients with head and neck cancer who are undergoing radiotherapy (RT) generally experience the highest rates of symptom frequency, severity and distress levels at the end of RT. The symptoms of mouth sores, dry mouth, loss of appetite, difficulty in swallowing, weight loss and change in the taste of food are experienced most frequently and severely during the third and fourth weeks, during which side-effects begin to be seen often, and thereafter during their continued treatment.
Care of long-term survivors of head and neck cancer after treatment with oral or facial prostheses, or both	British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Vol. 55, No. 7, pages 685-690.	September	The results of questionnaires and interviews conducted with head and neck cancer survivors found that surviving the cancer was an initial fear (up to a year postoperatively) and some survivors reported problems more than five years after treatment, particularly with swallowing, quality of saliva and intelligible speech. Overall, they maintained a good quality of life physically, socially, and emotionally. It suggests that patients need supportive care from the time of diagnosis, but do find a degree of self-management by five years after treatment.
Genetic markers could catch oesophageal cancer earlier	Nursing Standard, Vol. 32, No. 14, page 17.*	29 November	Researchers looking at tissue samples from people with Barrett's oesophagus identified predictive genetic markers in 94% of people who later developed signs of cancer. It is suggested that these genetic markers could mean people with high-risk genetic patterns can be closely monitored for early signs that cancer will develop, helping to diagnose and treat it earlier.
Zinc could be new treatment for oesophageal cancer	Gastrointestinal Nursing, Vol. 15, No. 9, page 12.*	November	Results of a US study demonstrate how zinc targets and blocks a specific calcium channel in oesophageal cancer (OC) cells preventing them from proliferating and dividing, potentially bringing new ways to prevent and treat the disease. The researchers believe this highlights the importance of including zinc in your diet and suggest that zinc supplementation could be a feasible option for patients with OC.

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* Please note: this is a summary of an article printed in another publication. Therefore the original full article has not been reviewed and is not available.





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Survival after surgery for oral cancer: a 30-year experience	British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Vol. 55, No. 11, pages 911-916.	November	Data from a study of patients with oral cancer supports the view that aggressive primary surgical management may improve overall survival. A total of 921 patients with a diagnosis of oral squamous cell carcinoma between 1973 and March 2016 were studied. A total of 339 patients died (34.5%) and the mean age at death was 73.4 years for women and 68.7 years for men. The researchers suggest that the overall survival was better than the 56% five-year survival reported for oral cancer in England in 2010, which may be a reflection of the treatment.
A Q methodology study to investigate the experiences of head and neck cancer patients from diagnosis to 1 year	European Journal of Cancer Care, Vol. 26, No. 6, pages 1-10.	November	A study which investigated the experiences of head and neck cancer patients highlighted that patients' view the care they receive differently. Whilst the care pathway might be uniform, healthcare professionals may need to acknowledge that any interaction should be sensitive to the cues from the patients so that care is more tailored and becomes an individual response.
Body mass index change during adulthood and risk of oesophageal squamous-cell carcinoma in a Japanese population: the Japan Public Health (JPHC)-based prospective study	British Journal of Cancer, Vol. 117, No.11, pages 1715-1722.	21 November	A study in Japan has found that an increase in body mass index (BMI) during adulthood is associated with a lower risk of developing oesophageal squamous-cell carcinoma (ESCC) among non-overweight subjects. This supports previous research which suggests that whilst excess BMI is a risk factor for many adverse health outcomes, including cancer, for ESCC, the opposite risk pattern has been consistently observed among different populations.
Did the addition of concurrent chemotherapy to conventional radiotherapy improve survival for patients with HPV +ve and HPV -ve Oropharynx cancer? A population-based study	British Journal of Cancer, Vol. 117, No. 8, pages 1105-1112.	10 October	A study to compare the efficacy of concurrent chemoradiotherapy (CRT) over conventional radiotherapy (RT) found that CRT did not improve survival outcomes for patients with HPV +ve or HPV -ve patients with oropharynx cancer. It is suggested that because costs, hospitalisations, gastrostomy tube insertions, acute and late toxicity and treatment-related mortality were all increased with CRT, oncologists might reconsider the evidence on which cisplatin-based CRT is used and further question the risks vs the benefits.

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Head and neck clinic: what is this lump in my mouth?	Pulse, pages 64-66.	September	Article discusses the case of a patient with adenoid cystic carcinoma of the sublingual gland, who presented to her GP with a painless swelling underneath the tongue. It discusses the investigations that can lead to a diagnosis in such a case and the treatment required, including surgical excision and adjuvant radiotherapy.
Head and neck clinic: this ulcer is not healing	Pulse, pages 52-53.	November	Article discusses the case of a patient who presented to his GP with a slowly enlarging, non-healing, painless ulcer on the floor of the mouth, which was later diagnosed as oral cancer. It examines the features of oral cancer and how a malignant ulcer does not heal, progressively enlarges and is firm on palpation. It goes on to discuss how oral cancer is investigated, diagnosed and treated.
Alcohol and cancer	The Lancet, Vol. 390, No. 10109, page 2215.	18 November	Article discusses a report which confirms a casual link between alcohol and cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx and oesophagus. It suggests that carcinogenesis is most common in tissues that are in direct contact with alcohol and increases with exposure. For example, a three times increase in the recommended alcohol limit raises the risk of oesophageal cancer eight times, leading to estimates that three-quarters of oesophageal cancers are due to high alcohol consumption. Because cancer of the oesophagus has a 5 year survival rate of less than 10%, the author suggests prevention is paramount.
The mixed messages on vaping that caused an e-cigarette shambles	The BMJ, Vol. 358, No. 4462, page 12.	30 September	Article discusses the controversy of Public Health England including e-cigarettes in its annual "Stoptober" smoking cessation television advertisements for the first time this year, within 24 hours of draft guidance from NICE advising GPs to tell patients that e-cigarettes are unlicensed for smoking cessation and that there was little evidence of long-term benefits or harms. It also shares study results, which found that the quit rate in the first six months of 2017 was 33% higher than the average for the previous 10 years, with lower socioeconomic groups accounting for all the improvement.

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References: 1. Innocenti M et al. J Pain Symptom Manage 2002; 24(5): 456-457. 2. McLean M. Poster presented at the British Association of Head and Neck Oncology Nurses National Study Day on Sharing Good Practice in Head and Neck Cancer Nursing, 12 June 2009. 3. Gibson et al. Presented at SIOP 2010. 4. Data on file: Patient online feedback. Correct as of August 2015.