

The 90-Second Examination

Combating Oral Cancer

IN CANADA, CANCERS OF THE ORAL CAVITY AND PHARYNX ACCOUNT FOR 2-3% OF ALL NEW CASES OF CANCER DIAGNOSED EACH YEAR. WHILE THEIR INCIDENCE IS COMPARATIVELY LOW, OVER 50% OF ORAL CANCERS HAVE ADVANCED BEYOND STAGE 1 BY THE TIME OF DIAGNOSIS.

This delay in diagnosis is significant and contributes to the disproportionate morbidity and mortality associated with such cancers. In fact, the five-year relative survival rate for oral cancers has remained low and relatively unchanged over the past three decades, despite advances in cancer treatments.

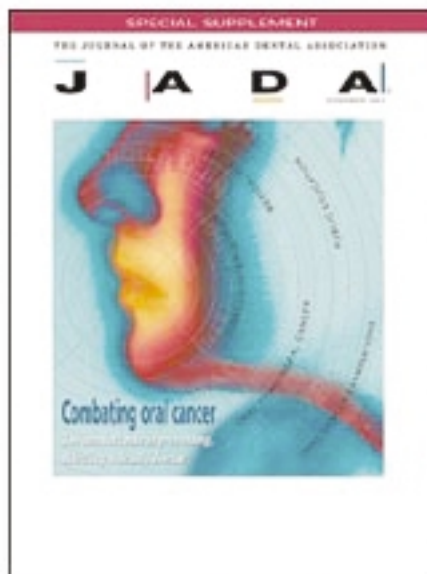
Fortunately, oral cancers can be detected earlier. Members should be familiar with the clinical features and associated risk factors of this disease. Further, patients should be examined on a regular basis for the presence of suspicious changes to the oral tissues: this simple visual and tactile examination takes as little as 90 seconds to perform. The five-year survival rate of 20% after late diagnosis of oral cancer rises to almost 80% if the diagnosis is made early!

With this issue of *Dispatch*, the advisory board to PEAK is pleased to announce its latest offering on this important subject: the Special Supplement to the Journal of the American Dental Association entitled "Combating oral cancer - The dentist's role in preventing, detecting a deadly disease" (November 2001). The

special supplement includes articles on the demographics and occurrence of oral cancers, detection of oral cancers, current management of oral cancer patients, professional and community efforts to prevent morbidity and mortality from oral cancers, dentistry's role in tobacco control, and the "90-second oral cancer examination."

Key points to consider:

* Over 90 % of oral cancers are carcinomas.



Practice Enhancement and Knowledge

- * The most common sites include the tongue, lips and floor of the mouth.
- * Known risk factors include the use of tobacco products and regular alcohol consumption.
- * Early detection and treatment greatly increases the odds of patient survival.
- * An oral cancer examination takes as little as 90 seconds to perform.

PEAK is a member service, whose goal is to regularly provide members with copies of key articles on a wide range of clinical and non-clinical topics from dental literature around the world. It is important to note that PEAK articles may contain opinions, views or statements that are not necessarily endorsed by the College. However, the PEAK advisory board is committed in its desire to provide quality material to enhance the knowledge and skills of member dentists.

If you have any suggestions for subjects to be addressed by PEAK, or questions about this membership service, please contact Dr. Michael Gardner, Assistant to the Registrar, Dental, at 416-934-5616, toll-free at 1-800-565-4591, or by e-mail at mgardner@rcdso.org. 