

Development of tools for the oral health and panoramic radiograph evaluation of head and neck cancer patients: A methodological study.

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Abstract

PURPOSE:

Describe the methodology used to construct tools for standardized data collection of head and neck cancer patients (HNCP).

METHODS:

We constructed the Oral Health Evaluation Tool (OHET) and Panoramic Radiograph Evaluation Tool (PRET) for systematic collection of long-term oral clinical/radiographical complications, prevalence, and severity. Tools were pilot-tested in 50 chemoradiation-treated HNCP >6 months post-therapy.

RESULTS:

Tools allowed for collection of extensive clinical and radiographical data. A medium of 1.9 years had elapsed since chemoradiation completion. Patients had a median of 6 missing teeth, 32.7% had no decay and a medium of 30% had filled surfaces; 42.9% had moderate-to-severe decay. Reduced/thickened saliva was noted in 85.4% and dry mucosa in 93.9%. Gingival bleeding was present in 75.5% HNCP and attachment loss in 86%. Four patients had trismus.

CONCLUSIONS:

Tools were user friendly and provided comprehensive, reproducible, and inexpensive means to evaluate post-therapy oral health of HNCP. Validation testing is ongoing.

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