

Oral carcinoma of the anterior hard palate: an unusual presentation

Précis

Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is the most common malignant disease of the oral cavity. It usually affects individuals over 50 years of age, with a history of tobacco or alcohol abuse, or both. This case report highlights the unusual presentation of an SCC in a young 22-year-old male. He was a non-smoker, social alcohol drinker, and was generally fit and well. Alongside the fact that this young patient had none of the usual risk factors for oral cancer, the abnormal lesion discovered on his anterior palate did not resemble a typical oral SCC. It was found in proximity to the maxillary central incisors, which had previously suffered trauma. Clinical and histopathological findings, and treatment, are discussed.

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Does the dentist have a role in identifying patients with undiagnosed diabetes mellitus?

Précis

This paper provides a literature review of the role of the dentist in screening patients for undiagnosed diabetes in the dental clinic. It highlights both dentist and patient attitudes towards such screening methods.

Abstract

Statement of the problem: Diabetes has become an epidemic and the incidence of undiagnosed diabetes is growing at an alarming rate. Diabetes is an associated risk factor for chronic periodontitis and has several other oral symptoms including dry mouth and oral infection. Expanding the role of the dentist may prove to be an efficient method of early detection and management of diabetes.

Purpose of the study: The aim of this paper is to critically analyse the literature and determine whether screening for undiagnosed diabetes mellitus is within the dentist's scope of practice.

Materials and methods: A PubMed/Google Scholar/Google literature search was conducted of papers published in the English language in the years 1980-2013. Over 140 articles were examined. Reference lists of key articles were also sourced and analysed. The most pertinent articles are presented in this review.

Results: Screening for diabetes mellitus in the dental office should only be carried out for high-risk patients in order for such screenings to be cost-effective.

Conclusions: Dentists have an ethical obligation and a duty of care to protect the well-being of their patients. A screening procedure to detect a serious underlying, undiagnosed systemic condition does not cause any harm to the patient and is in the patient's best interests.

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