JOP study indicates oral cancer patients could be diagnosed earlier

Worldwide, more than 500,000 new cases of cancer of the mouth are diagnosed each year. The majority of these cancers are found too late, causing many people to die within five years of finding out they have cancer.

There exists much information addressing issues related to the patient who has undergone surgery or chemotherapy, but little information related to early diagnosis and referral.

In a new article in the Journal of Prosthodontics, researchers led by Michael A. Siegel, DDS, MS, FDS, RCsed, describe the epidemiology of oral cancer and the diagnostic tools currently available to prosthodontists to ensure that their patients are diagnosed at the earliest possible time.

Although the need for prosthodontics was expected to decline with the promotion of preventive measures, it is actually increasing with the aging population.

The highest risk of developing oral cancer is in adults older than 40 who use both tobacco and alcohol. However, these cancers can develop in anyone, so annual prosthodontist visits are increasingly important.

The majority of oral, head and neck cancer are initially diagnosed in a late stage, which has a five-year prognosis of less than 50 percent. If these tumors are found in their earliest stage, the five-year prognosis is 95 percent.

All dentists, including prosthodontists, are specifically trained to detect these tumors in an early stage. Only 28 percent of patients reported ever having had an oral cancer examination.

Patients who have lost their teeth must be specifically counseled about returning for prescribed, regular recall examinations. They may incorrectly believe that, as they do not have all or any of their teeth, they do not need to be regularly followed by a prosthodontist.

Recently, several companies have marketed simple tests intended to aid the dentist in the early detection and diagnosis of oral lesions even before they turn into cancer; these tests are harmless and relatively inexpensive. Any sore, lump, or bump in the mouth that bleeds, is enlarging or will not heal should be evaluated at the earliest possible time.

“If prosthodontists, and other dentists, are more vigilant in performing oral cancer screening examinations on all of their patients, the quality of life and survivability from these cancers will be greatly improved, whereby morbidity and mortality will be greatly reduced,” the researchers conclude.

(Source: The Journal of Prosthodontics)

New study of doctor-patient relationships shows technology impacts patient perceptions

Groundbreaking survey of 23,000 dental patients by Sesame Communications confirms connection

Sesame Communications, provider of software and services to the dental industry, released results from a new survey that revealed that the use of Internet technology greatly influences patient perceptions, among other findings.

Patients associate their doctor’s adoption of the latest online technologies and tools with advanced clinical skills, treatment methods, materials, and procedures.

These findings, along with other results and insights, are summarized in a new whitepaper titled “Technology Meets Tradition.”

The findings and content are based on more than 23,000 dental patient surveys submitted January through October 2008, across the United States and Canada.

Believed to be the largest study of its kind ever conducted, the whitepaper is now available for free download at www.sesamecommunications.com.

“Patients have spoken, and they’re online,” said Frith Maier, CEO and founder of Sesame Communications.

“They are demanding online access and interaction on their terms. Doctors risk being left behind unless they get online.”

Other findings in the “Technology Meets Tradition” whitepaper include:

• E-mail trumps phone calls. Patients expressed an overwhelming preference for e-mail as they increasingly manage their health and dental care online. E-mail was preferred by more than 5:1 over traditional phone calls for appointment reminders and other communication.

• Financial visibility and online payment embraced by patients. More than 80 percent of patients surveyed expressed comfort with making payments online and more than 90 percent enthusiastically endorsed it.

“Being a great dentist means a lot more than being an expert on teeth. A truly great dentist must also be a good communicator,” said Dr. Larry Emmott, president of Emmott on Technology. “This study clearly shows that now more than ever before, being online is critical to enhancing communication and building the doctor-patient relationship.”

About Sesame Communications

Sesame Communications is a premier provider of online products and services for the dental industry. Sesame supports the largest online channel in dentistry, with nearly 2 million patients logging on for information and electronic alerts from their dental professionals.

Sesame delivers a comprehensive solution, which enables doctors to enhance patient relationships and practice profitability by improving staff productivity, enhancing practice marketing and increasing patient referrals.

More than 15,000 dental providers are registered for Sesame Interactive, which streamlines communications between dentists and specialists and improves treatment planning.

Sesame is privately held and headquartered in Seattle, Wash., and can be found at www.sesamecommunications.com or by calling (877) 653-5193.
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A new twist on surgical guides

Dr. Bavār presents new technique in Journal of Oral Implantology

Surgical guides have long been used to help dentists record implant locations and adaptations for dentures and bridges. With the advent of computer-assisted tomography (CT), dentists can map the patient’s available bone, placement of prosthetic teeth and bite impression and produce a surgical guide before the patient undergoes any procedure. However, currently available surgical guide techniques have certain shortcomings: some require multiple guides for different-sized drilling, are unstable or do not record the rotational position of implants, whereas others have accounted for these issues but do not allow custom molds and abutments to be made, resulting in inaccurate or poorly fitting prostheses.

In the latest issue of the Journal of Oral Implantology, Trevor Bavār, DDS, presents a new technique that resolves these deficiencies. This technique uses a single guide with reduction sleeves to accommodate different-sized drilling, records implant positioning and angles on the guide and creates an index, generates custom copings and abutments and emplaces an acrylic temporary yet aesthetic bridge in one visit. Using the custom measurements from the index and bite registration, the final prosthetic can be created and the completed bridge can be installed in just three noninvasive follow-up visits.

Using this index and guide system, surgical specialists and restorative dentists can work separately or as a team to address aesthetic, prosthetic and implant needs simultaneously.

To read the entire study, go to: http://www.allenpress.com/pdf/ORI/MH4.610.15631548.1336.346.pdf

The Journal of Oral Implantology is the official publication of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry and of the American Academy of Implant Prosthodontics. It is dedicated to providing valuable information to general dentists, oral surgeons, prosthodontists, periodontists, scientists, clinicians, laboratory owners and technicians, manufacturers and educators. Implant basics, prosthetics, pharmaceuticals, the latest research in implantology, implant surgery and advanced implant procedures are some of the topics covered.

For more information, visit http://www.joionline.org/orimonline/request-index.html

(Source: Journal of Oral Implantology)