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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Diagnostic and therapeutic features associated with modification of quality-of-life's outcomes between one and six months after major surgery for head and neck cancer[☆]



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KEYWORDS

Quality of life;
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Abstract

Introduction: Treatments used in head and neck cancer greatly impact the physical, psychological and functional state of patients. Evaluation of quality of life has become an integral part of the treatment.

Objective: This retrospective study evaluates features involved in changes in quality of life after major surgery for head and neck cancer within six months, according to self-reported outcomes.

Methods: One hundred and thirty patients completed the University of Washington Quality of Life questionnaire one and six months after major surgery for head and neck cancer. A multivariate model was used to evaluate which diagnostic and therapeutic features were related to improvement of quality of life within a six-month period.

Results: Significant improvement in most features related to quality of life was already recognizable at six months. Patients submitted to more invasive treatment had the biggest improvement in quality of life between time-points, as well as those patients with bigger tumors.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Qualidade de vida;
Câncer de cabeça
e pescoço;
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Conclusion: After major surgery, patients may undergo fast recovery, with overall quality of life likely to improve in the short-term. Clinicians must be aware of the importance of dealing with treatment-related issues immediately after surgery, with hopeful possibility of on-the-upgrade results.

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Características terapêuticas e diagnósticas associadas a modificações nos resultados da qualidade de vida entre um e seis meses após cirurgia de grande porte para câncer de cabeça e pescoço**Resumo**

Introdução: Os tratamentos adotados em câncer de cabeça e pescoço causam grande impacto nos estados físico, psicológico e funcional dos pacientes. A avaliação da qualidade de vida tornou-se parte integrante do tratamento.

Objetivo: Este estudo retrospectivo avaliou os aspectos envolvidos nas mudanças da qualidade de vida pós-cirurgia de grande porte para câncer de cabeça e pescoço no período de seis meses, de acordo com os resultados autorrelatados.

Método: Cento e trinta pacientes responderam ao Questionário de Avaliação de Qualidade de Vida da Universidade de Washington, um e seis meses após cirurgia de grande porte para câncer de cabeça e pescoço. Um modelo multivariado foi usado para avaliar quais características terapêuticas e diagnósticas estavam relacionadas à melhora da qualidade de vida no período de seis meses.

Resultados: Melhora significativa na maioria dos aspectos relacionados à qualidade de vida já podia ser percebida em seis meses. Os pacientes submetidos a um tratamento mais invasivo apresentaram os melhores avanços na qualidade de vida entre os tempos de avaliação, bem como os pacientes portadores de tumores maiores.

Conclusão: Após uma cirurgia de grande porte, os pacientes podem ter recuperação rápida, com melhora da qualidade de vida global em pouco tempo. Os médicos devem estar cientes da importância de lidar com questões relacionadas ao tratamento imediatamente após a cirurgia, devido à possibilidade de resultados melhores.

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Introduction

Oral/oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) is the fifth most frequent cancer among males and the seventh among females worldwide, with prevalence between 2% and 4% of all malignant tumors in Europe,¹ and overall five-year survival rate of around 60%.² The etiology of oral cancer is unknown, although various factors have been considered part of its development, such as smoking, alcohol and oncogenic viruses.^{3,4} Being asymptomatic for a long time, OSCCs are often diagnosed at an advanced stage. Copious extirpation achieving tumor-free margins, as well as effective removal of affected/suspect lymph nodes, are vital steps to ensure long-term survival. Although treatment and reconstructive abilities have improved to such an extent that many patients can be fully integrated into society after treatment, OSCC can have a profound impact on the quality of life (QoL) of patients since its resection remains associated with disfigurement and dysfunctions.^{5,6} For this reason, QoL is actually considered a multi-dimensional concept, which comprises the individual's perception of their state of health

within the cultural context and value system where they live and in relation to their goals, socio-demographic parameters and social relations,⁷ and an integral part of the outcome of treatment.⁸

Many studies report that OSCC patients suffer from a worse cosmetic outcome, restricted independence in daily activities and recreation, serious deficits in chewing, swallowing and speech, and frequent mood and anxiety disorders.⁹ This is due to the fact that advanced OSCC requires highly destructive surgery with wide resections that involve transmandibular approaches, at times with resection, neck dissection and flap reconstruction as well as adjuvant radiotherapy (RT), with inevitable functional impairment.¹⁰

In this study we selected cancer patients and evaluated the improvement of QoL, expressed as "QoL outcomes", through the University of Washington Quality of Life questionnaire (UW-QoL), in relation to diagnostic (age, sex, tumor site, tumor stage, nodes stage) and therapeutic (kind of cancer treatment, surgical approach and reconstructive technique) features after major surgery for OSCC.

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