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Smoking and alcohol cessation programs in patients with head and neck cancer: A qualitative study in 5 tertiary referral hospitals and 1 comprehensive cancer center in Rhone, Alpes region, France

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Background: A majority of head and neck cancers are associated with smoking and alcohol exposure. Smoking and Alcohol Cessation (ASC) is associated with improved quality of life, cancer therapy efficacy, decreased treatment-related and cardiovascular risks, and is expected to decrease the risk of second primary tumor. It is therefore, a high priority in the plan of care. However, results of current ASC programs are disappointing and understanding the reasons of this is critical.

Material & Methods: We started a sociological and qualitative study in 6 academic centers including 3 university hospitals, 1 regional hospital and 1 comprehensive cancer center.

Results: We first interviewed surgeons and care givers involved in ASC programs. It was observed that poor communication between stakeholders, absence of alignment of care goals between patients, surgeons and other caregivers, and low level of understanding by patients of the benefits of ASC were felt to represent frequent obstacles to successful outcome. Face-to-face interviews of 30 patients by a sociologist are pending to understand how the patients react to the information given concerning their disease, what is their understanding of the risks of smoking, alcohol consumption and of the benefits associated with ASC; whether they feel supported by their caregivers, and what are the obstacles and incentives that may impact ASC in their view.

Conclusion: More work is needed to identify the hurdles associated with successful ASC.

Biography

Véronique Régnier Denois currently works in a multidisciplinary research team focused on Cancer. She is interested in all aspects of Cancer Prevention. She uses Qualitative Methodologies in several contexts like: To observe, in the French context, the practice of shared decision-making in encounters between patients and physicians; to identify the unmet needs of survivors in order to integrate them into educational programs; to develop patient-centered and comprehensive approach for the understanding of oral cancer therapies adherence.

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