

Awareness about Throat Cancer in Health care professionals and non professionals

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Abstract:

Throat cancer can originate in the larynx, thyroid gland or squamous cells lining the pharynx. It can be malignant or benign. Its awareness is very low in public. Risk factors for throat cancer include smoking and heavy alcohol consumption. Symptoms include voice changes, such as hoarseness, the sensation of something stuck in the throat, and persistent pain. Our study aims to find its awareness in different professionals. Data was collected from 100 professionals (20 non-medicals, 80 medicals). In the medical group of professionals 20 pharmacists, 20 doctors, 20 pharmacy students and 20 MBBS/BDS students were selected randomly for our survey. This survey was done in Karachi. The awareness rate is high in doctors and then in pharmacy students. In the non-medical professionals the awareness rate is very low, that is less than 50%. According to our survey report, Doctors have awareness about this type of cancer almost 87.5%. Pharmacy students have awareness about throat cancer almost 72%. Pharmacists have awareness about this type of cancer almost 58%. MBBS/BDS students aware about throat cancer 69%. The awareness should be 100% in all the medical professionals. Steps must be taken to increase its awareness in public.

Key words: Throat cancer, larynx, malignant, benign, smoking, alcohol consumption

Introduction

In throat, the larynx is an organ made up of tissues. Cancer begins in cells, the building blocks that make up tissues. New cells form when the body has not need of new cell, and damaged and old cells don't die as they should. This abnormal growth of extra cells often forms a mass of tissue called as tumor. Tumors in the larynx can be benign (not cancer) or malignant (cancer).¹

Types:

Laryngeal cancer includes tumours of the Supraglottis, glottis, subglottis.² Public awareness of head and neck cancer is low.³⁻⁷

Risk factors: Smoking is a risk factor for all tumour sites covered by this guideline.⁸⁻¹⁵ Alcohol consumption strongly increases the risk of developing cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx and larynx.^{16,17} The combination of smoking and alcohol consumption increases the risk of developing cancer for all sites covered by this guideline.¹⁸ Poor diet is a risk factor for head and neck cancer.¹⁹ The key protective elements of the Mediterranean diet include: citrus fruit; vegetables, specifically tomatoes (fresh and processed); olive oil and fish oils.²⁰⁻²³ There is evidence to suggest that the presence of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD) is a risk factor for laryngeal and pharyngeal cancer.²⁴ There is evidence to suggest a genetic susceptibility to head and neck cancer. There are no valid screening tools yet to find out genetic problems.²⁵⁻²⁹ Human papillomavirus (HPV) 16 sero-positivity is associated with an increased risk of oral/pharyngeal cancer.^{30,31}

Symptoms:

- A change in voice for more than 3 weeks
- A swallowing problem for more than 6 weeks
- A lump in the neck

Other symptoms may include:

- Trouble breathing
- A cough that doesn't go away
- An earache that doesn't go away

These symptoms may be caused by laryngeal cancer or by other health problems.¹

Diagnosis:

- Medical history
- Physical examination, which may include using a mirror to examine the larynx (laryngoscopy)

- Video-stroboscopy – a specialist test throat cancer, in which a small tube with a camera on its tip is passed through the nose and down the throat to view the larynx and record vocal cord movements onto videotape
- Biopsy – a sample of suspect tissue is removed for examination in a laboratory
- X-rays
- Ultrasound
- CT scan
- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan
- PET (position emission tomography) scan
- Blood tests
- Thyroid scan – a special x-ray of the thyroid following an injection of radioactive material.

Treatment:

Treatment of mouth and throat cancer may involve surgery to remove the cancer, radiotherapy, chemotherapy or a combination of all three treatments. Cancers in the mouth are generally treated with surgery, and may involve radiotherapy with or without chemotherapy after the operation. Cancers of the throat and voice box may be treated by surgery or radiotherapy with or without chemotherapy. The aim of the surgery is to remove the cancer and in some cases where the cancer is detected early, only a small area may need to be removed.

Methodology:

It is survey based study which was conducted in Karachi. A specially designed questionnaire was used for data collection. A cross sectional survey was conducted on 100 professionals (n=100), in the month of May-July, 2014. Questions were asked about the awareness of throat cancer, signs and symptoms of throat cancer, risk factors of throat cancer, types of throat cancer, its diagnosis and treatment to assess about the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Risk Perceptions of different professionals regarding throat cancer. We collected Data from 20 Pharmacists, 20 Doctors, 20 Pharmacy Students, 20 Medical Students MBBS/BDS, and 20 people belonging to other professionals (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, and TELECOMMUNICATION) was and analyzed.

Result:

According to our survey on awareness about throat cancer in Karachi, the awareness rate among different professionals like Pharmacists, Doctors, Pharmacy Students, Medical Students MBBS/BDS, and people belonging to other professionals (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, and TELECOMMUNICATION) is high. We find 83% professionals have basic knowledge about the throat cancer. 41% professionals have information about the types of throat cancer. 74% professionals have information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer. 79% professionals have information about the risk factors of throat cancer. 59% professionals have information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer. 56% professionals have information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer.

Discussion:

Throat cancer is abnormal growth of cells in the throat. Our survey aims to find out its awareness among different professionals like Pharmacists, Doctors, Pharmacy Students, Medical Students MBBS/BDS, and people belonging to other professionals (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, and TELECOMMUNICATION) in Karachi. The awareness rate is found high in different professionals. Different questions were asked in our survey from these professionals.

The first question which was asked in our survey from these professionals was about the basic information of throat cancer. 83 people out of 100 in our survey have basic information about this type of cancer. According to our survey 17 out 20 pharmacists have basic information about throat cancer while 3 out of 20 have no basic information about throat cancer. . According to our survey 18 out 20 doctors have basic information about throat cancer while 2 out of 20 have no basic information about throat cancer. According to our survey 19 out 20 pharmacy students have basic information about throat cancer while 1 out of 20 has no basic information about throat cancer. According to our survey 14 out 20 Medical Students MBBS/BDS have basic information about throat cancer while 6 out of 20 have no basic information about throat cancer. According to our survey 15 out 20 non-medical professionals like commerce, engineering, nursing and telecommunication, have basic information about throat cancer while 5 out of 20 have no basic information about throat cancer.

The second question which was asked in our survey from these professionals was about the types of throat cancer. 41 people out of 100 in our survey have basic information about types of this cancer. According to our survey 6 out 20 pharmacists have basic information about the types of throat cancer while 14 out of 20 have no basic information about the types of throat cancer. . According to our survey 15 out 20 doctors have basic

information about the types of throat cancer while 5 out of 20 have no basic information about the types of throat cancer. According to our survey 7 out of 20 pharmacy students have basic information about the types of throat cancer while 13 out of 20 has no basic information about the types of throat cancer. According to our survey 8 out of 20 Medical Students MBBS/BDS have basic information about the types of throat cancer while 12 out of 20 have no basic information about the types of throat cancer. According to our survey 5 out of 20 non-medical professionals like commerce, engineering, nursing and telecommunication, have basic information about the types of throat cancer while 15 out of 20 have no basic information about the types of throat cancer.

The third question which was asked in our survey from these professionals was about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer. 74 people out of 100 in our survey have basic information about sign & symptoms of this cancer. According to our survey 13 out of 20 pharmacists have basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer while 7 out of 20 have no basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer. . According to our survey 20 out of 20 doctors have basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer while no one out of 20 have no basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer. According to our survey 18 out of 20 pharmacy students have basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer while 2 out of 20 has no basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer. According to our survey 15 out of 20 Medical Students MBBS/BDS have basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer while 5 out of 20 have no basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer. According to our survey 8 out of 20 non-medical professionals like commerce, engineering, nursing and telecommunication, have basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer while 12 out of 20 have no basic information about the sign & symptoms of throat cancer.

The fourth question which was asked in our survey from these professionals was about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer. 79 people out of 100 in our survey have basic information about causes or risk factors of this cancer. According to our survey 16 out of 20 pharmacists have basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer while 4 out of 20 have no basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer. According to our survey 19 out of 20 doctors have basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer while one out of 20 have no basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer. According to our survey 18 out of 20 pharmacy students have basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer while 2 out of 20 has no basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer. According to our survey 15 out of 20 Medical Students MBBS/BDS have basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer while 5 out of 20 have no basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer. According to our survey 11 out of 20 non-medical professionals like commerce, engineering, nursing and telecommunication, have basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer while 9 out of 20 have no basic information about the causes or risk factors of throat cancer.

The fifth question which was asked in our survey from these professionals was about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer. 59 people out of 100 in our survey have basic information about diagnostic techniques and tools for this cancer. According to our survey 8 out of 20 pharmacists have basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer while 12 out of 20 have no basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer. According to our survey 17 out of 20 doctors have basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer while 3 out of 20 have no basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer. According to our survey 12 out of 20 pharmacy students have basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer while 8 out of 20 has no basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer. According to our survey 15 out of 20 Medical Students MBBS/BDS have basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer while 5 out of 20 have no basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer. According to our survey 7 out of 20 non-medical professionals like commerce, engineering, nursing and telecommunication, have basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer while 13 out of 20 have no basic information about the diagnostic techniques and tools for throat cancer.

The last question which was asked in our survey from these professionals was about the treatment strategies of throat cancer. 56 people out of 100 in our survey have basic information about treatment strategies of this cancer. According to our survey 10 out of 20 pharmacists have basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer while 10 out of 20 have no basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer. According to our survey 16 out of 20 doctors have basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer while 4 out of 20 have no basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer. According to our survey 13 out of 20 pharmacy students have basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer while 7 out of 20 has no basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer. According to our survey 10 out of 20 Medical Students MBBS/BDS have basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer while 10 out of 20 have no basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer. According to our survey 7 out of 20 non-medical professionals like commerce, engineering, nursing and telecommunication, have

basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer while 13 out of 20 have no basic information about the treatment strategies of throat cancer.

CONCLUSION:

Cancer in throat is also a type of abnormal growth of cells. Its awareness was present 58% in pharmacist, 87.5% in doctors, 72.5% in pharmacy students, 69% in medical students (MBBS/BDS), and 44% in non-medical professionals. Doctors are well aware of this type of cancer but the awareness should be 100% while there is a need to increase its awareness in non-medical professionals.

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		All		Do you know about the THROAT CANCER?			
				No		Yes	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Group	Total	100	100%	17	17%	83	83%
	PHARMACISTS	20	20%	<5	15%	17	85%
	DOCTORS	20	20%	<5	10%	18	90%
	PHARMACY STUDENTS	20	20%	<5	5%	19	95%
	MEDICAL STUDENT MBBS/BDS	20	20%	6	30%	14	70%
	OTHER FIELDS (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, TELECOMMUNICATION)	20	20%	5	25%	15	75%

		All		Do you know about the sign & symptoms of THROAT CANCER?			
				No		Yes	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Group	Total	100	100%	26	26%	74	74%
	PHARMACISTS	20	20%	7	35%	13	65%
	DOCTORS	20	20%			20	100%
	PHARMACY STUDENTS	20	20%	<5	10%	18	90%
	MEDICAL STUDENT MBBS/BDS	20	20%	5	25%	15	75%
	OTHER FIELDS (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, TELECOMMUNICATION)	20	20%	12	60%	8	40%

		All		Do you know the causes or risk factors of THROAT CANCER?			
				No		Yes	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Group	Total	100	100%	21	21%	79	79%
	PHARMACISTS	20	20%	<5	20%	16	80%
	DOCTORS	20	20%	<5	5%	19	95%
	PHARMACY STUDENTS	20	20%	<5	10%	18	90%
	MEDICAL STUDENT MBBS/BDS	20	20%	5	25%	15	75%
	OTHER FIELDS (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, TELECOMMUNICATION)	20	20%	9	45%	11	55%

		All		Do you know the types of THROAT CANCER?			
				No		Yes	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Group	Total	100	100%	59	59%	41	41%
	PHARMACISTS	20	20%	14	70%	6	30%
	DOCTORS	20	20%	5	25%	15	75%
	PHARMACY STUDENTS	20	20%	13	65%	7	35%
	MEDICAL STUDENT MBBS/BDS	20	20%	12	60%	8	40%
	OTHER FIELDS (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, TELECOMMUNICATION)	20	20%	15	75%	5	25%

		All		Do you know that how to diagnose THROAT CANCER?			
				No		Yes	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Group	Total	100	100%	41	41%	59	59%
	PHARMACISTS	20	20%	12	60%	8	40%
	DOCTORS	20	20%	<5	15%	17	85%
	PHARMACY STUDENTS	20	20%	8	40%	12	60%
	MEDICAL STUDENT MBBS/BDS	20	20%	5	25%	15	75%
	OTHER FIELDS (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, TELECOMMUNICATION)	20	20%	13	65%	7	35%

		All		Do you know the treatment of THROAT CANCER?			
				No		Yes	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Group	Total	100	100%	44	44%	56	56%
	PHARMACISTS	20	20%	10	50%	10	50%
	DOCTORS	20	20%	<5	20%	16	80%
	PHARMACY STUDENTS	20	20%	7	35%	13	65%
	MEDICAL STUDENT MBBS/BDS	20	20%	10	50%	10	50%
	OTHER FIELDS (COMMERCE, ENGINEERING, NURSING, TELECOMMUNICATION)	20	20%	13	65%	7	35%