

RADIATION INDUCED XEROSTOMIA : EVALUATION OF CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS OF A MUCIN CONTAINING ARTIFICIAL SALIVA.

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Radiotherapy of head and neck cancers modifies saliva production : various degrees of hyposialia to asialia usually occur. Xerostomia produces local and general unfavorable consequences as well as marked psycho-social effects. In order to improve quality of life, these consequences have been evaluated and the efficacy of a new saliva substitute has been tested.

The first experimental group consists of 60 patients treated for buccal cavity or pharynx carcinoma from 3 to 60 months. Each patient was interviewed on the basis of a questionnaire. 65 items with open or forced choice measure the degree of xerostomia and assess its consequences. The second group concerns the most complaining patients. These have received a new saliva substitute based on pig and bovine gastric mucin (Saliva Orthana). This saliva has been applied for 6 weeks. The treated population was asked to fill in a new questionnaire and scores were compared. Most of patients have or have had the sensation of dry mouth. In more than 50 % this sensation is strong with need of frequent drinking, of carrying water along and of getting up at night. Discomfort to eat and to speak is usual. Many patients are intolerant to their dental prosthesis. Psycho-social effects are not negligible. Anxiety, irritability, retirement within oneself emerge among a lot of people. Social communications become poorer and restriction of leisure activities are observed. Professional handicap can also occur.

The use of Saliva Orthana improves most of complaints. Chewing and swallowing are easier and speaking becomes less difficult. Many patients sleep better. The tolerance to denture increases. Artificial saliva also exerts a beneficial influence on psycho-social level. Results will be detailed and discussed in the presentation giving support of quality of life improvement.

Radiotherapy induced xerostomia produces important psycho-social consequences. A mucin containing artificial saliva can be of great help.