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Effect of Application of Honey in Chemo-Radiation Induced Mucositis and to Assess its Clinical Benefits in Improving Quality of Life in Patients of Head and Neck Cancer

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Introduction: The cytotoxic effects of chemo-radiation, in addition to their intended effects on cancer cells, unfortunately extends to normal tissue as well, such as gastrointestinal mucosa and bone marrow. This is mainly brought about by the oxidative damage caused by the generation of free radicals.

To the head and neck cancer patient, the most crippling ill-effect of chemo-radiations oral mucositis. In addition to being a potentially dose limiting complication of chemo-radiation, oral mucositis lends a devastating blow to patient's daily activities and brings about marked reduction in their quality of life (QOL).

Resurgence in the use of honey for wound management coupled with research into its excellent antioxidant and antiseptic profile has urged some researchers to investigate its role in amelioration of radiation mucositis.

Investigation into the viability of honey as a therapeutic agent for chemo-radiation induced mucositis and to find whether it causes quantifiable improvement in QOL forms the crux of this study.

Material and Method: A total of 50 patients of H&N cancer (25 cases, 25 controls) were enrolled in the study and their QOL was recorded, at regular intervals during radiotherapy. The study group received oral honey along with radiotherapy while the control group received standard oral hygiene instructions only.

Results: The QOL scores were significantly better in the study group compared to controls after completion of radiotherapy.