

THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH HEAD AND NECK SOCIETY

Title: Epidemiology and survival of HPV associated oropharyngeal cancer in Ireland

Body: Background

Oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinomas (SCC) are one of the most common human papilloma virus (HPV) associated cancers. We present the most recent incidence and survival estimates for oropharyngeal SCC in Ireland.

Methods

Average case counts and age-standardised incidence rates (ASR) of oropharyngeal SCC were calculated for the period 2017-2021, annual trends 1994-2021 were also identified. 5-year net survival was estimated per diagnosis period, age group and stage at diagnosis.

Results

On average 154 men and 46 women were diagnosed with oropharyngeal SCC per year 2017-2021 (ASR 7.7/100,000 and 2.2/100,00 respectively). The ASR has increased significantly over time, by 3.8% per year 1999-2021 in men and 3.9% per year 1994-2021 in women. Most tumours are diagnosed late, with 59% diagnosed at stage IV.

Age-standardised 5-year net survival has improved from 32% in 1994-1998 to 50% in 2014-2018. Survival decreases with increasing age (from over 70% in 15-44 year olds to only 20% of 75+ year olds 2014-2018) and stage at diagnosis (from 64% at stage I to 41% at stage IV, 2014-2018).

Conclusion

The impact of vaccination on incidence of oropharyngeal cancers is yet to be seen. 5-year net survival has improved over time, however the majority of cases continue to be diagnosed with advanced disease.

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