Oropharyngeal Cancer and HPV

Measuring knowledge and impact among survivors of head and neck cancer

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BACKGROUND: Little is known about how survivors of human papillomavirus (HPV)-related oropharyngeal cancers (OPCs) learn about HPV, how knowledgeable they are, and how the diagnosis impacts their relationship with their sexual partner.

OBJECTIVES: This study aimed to describe survivors’ knowledge level regarding HPV-related OPCs.

METHODS: This qualitative study was developed as a non-randomized, single-center, cross-sectional study of individuals newly diagnosed with a HPV-related squamous cell carcinoma of the oropharynx and completed treatment at least three months prior to enrollment in the study.

FINDINGS: Thirty-four of the 64 surveys sent were completed. Respondents reported a strong interest in knowing about HPV but demonstrated low knowledge of HPV. Most reported that they were not taught about HPV at the time of diagnosis; Internet searchers were their primary source for information. Most reported that their relationship with their partner was not harmed by the HPV diagnosis, but most also reported decreased sexual intimacy with their partner.

KEYWORDS
head and neck cancer; oropharyngeal; human papillomavirus; knowledge

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