



A Multidisciplinary Approach To Minimize Duration Of PEG Tube Dependence In Patients With Head & Neck Cancer: A Community Hospital Experience

Yugandhara Kate, MD¹; Sandhya Maradana, MD²; Taruna Arora, MD¹; Liza Gibbs, MS, RD, LDN³; Ahmad Daniyal Siddiqui, MD¹; ¹Saint Vincent Hospital, Worcester MA; ²University of Arizona; ³University of Arizona College of Medicine



Background

- Head and neck cancer (HNC) patients have high risk of feeding tube dependence following chemoradiotherapy (CRT).
- A multidisciplinary team approach involving dietitian and speech and language pathologist (SLP) has shown to improve weight, post-treatment swallowing function resulting in early removal of percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube and improved quality of life..

Methods

- A retrospective chart review of 25 patients with HNC who received CRT was performed.
- Significant weight loss was defined as >7.5% at end of treatment and >10% at end of 6 months.
- Association between duration of PEG tube and age, body mass index (BMI), sex, Human Papillomavirus (HPV) status and timing of tube placement was modeled using linear regression.

Baseline Characteristics

Mean age at diagnosis	62 (0.8)
BMI	27.1 (6.58)
Male	19 (76%)
Smokers	19 (76%)
HPV positive	12 (48%)
Cancer site	
Oropharynx	13 (52%)
Hypopharynx	5 (20%)
Larynx	4 (16%)
Others	3 (12%)
Mean duration of PEG dependence	98 days

Conclusions

- Nutritional support and symptom management are critical to help minimize weight loss and optimize overall quality of care following CRT in HNC patients. A multidisciplinary approach with integration of dietician and SLP facilitates treatment adherence, minimizes weight loss and duration of PEG tube dependance leading to improved quality of life.

Results

- 25 patients with stage II-IV HNC diagnosed between 2015-2019 who received PEG tube before or after initiating CRT were included. Of these, 16 had PEG tube placed prophylactically.
- Majority of the patients reported taste alterations, dysphagia and xerostomia.
- 76% (19) had early PEG tube removal by 120 days after treatment.
- Of the available data, 60% and 91% patients did not have significant weight loss during treatment and at 6 months after treatment, respectively.
- All patients followed up with a dietitian and all, but two patients worked with a SLP.
- 60% (15) of patients had a support system defined as an involved family member.
- There was no significant association between duration of PEG tube dependence and age, sex, BMI, HPV status or timing of placement.