



## Letter

# Oral Carcinoma and Potentially Malignant Lesions in Brazil

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ALTHOUGH IT is well recognised that there are high incidence rates of oral squamous cell carcinoma in the developing world, especially in south and south-east Asia (parts of India, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal and Vietnam), the incidence of oral carcinoma is also very high in some other areas of the world such as in Brazil [1].

We have examined all 512 new patients (ages ranged from 15 to 78 years) who attended an Oral Medicine Service in Brazil over the period August 1989–August 1992 with oral mucosal complaints. The frequency and distribution of oral carcinoma

and potentially malignant oral lesions including leukoplakia, lichen planus, and actinic cheilitis were recorded (Tables 1 and 2).

Potentially malignant lesions were seen in 58 (11.3%) of the total group and oral carcinoma was diagnosed in 19 patients (3.7%). Both potentially malignant and malignant lesions were more frequent in males. The frequency of leukoplakia was higher than the other potentially malignant lesions considered. The highest incidence of potentially malignant lesions, and that of carcinoma was in the 60–80 age group.

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1. Cancer Incidence in Five Continents, Volume V. Muir C, Waterhouse J, Mack T, Pavell J, Whelan S, eds. IARC Publication No. 88, Lyon (1987).

Table 1. The distribution by age of oral carcinoma and potentially malignant oral lesions

Age group (years)	No. in study group	Leukoplakia		Lichen planus		Actinic cheilitis		All potentially malignant lesions		Carcinoma	
		n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
0–20	58	1	(1.7)	—		1	(1.7)	2	(3.4)	—	
20–40	179	11	(6.1)	5	(2.8)	3	(1.7)	19	(10.6)	—	
40–60	196	15	(7.7)	4	(2.0)	6	(3.1)	25	(12.8)	8	
60–80	79	7	(8.9)	1	(1.3)	4	(5.1)	12	(15.2)	11	(13.9)
Total	512	34	(6.6)	10	(2.0)	14	(3.6)	58	(11.3)	19	(3.7)

Table 2. Frequency of carcinoma and potentially malignant oral lesions by gender

Sex	No. in group	Leukoplakia	Lichen planus	Actinic cheilitis	Carcinoma
M	196	22	7	5	15
F	316	12	3	9	4
Total	512	34	10	14	19