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**ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN ADVANCED HEAD AND NECK CANCER PATIENTS UNDERGOING INDUCTION CHEMOTHERAPY: A MULTICENTRIC CONTROLLED CLINICAL TRIAL.** M David, (1) L Meeus, (2) P Fargeot, (3) P Cappelaere, (4) L Traissac (5) O Garraud, (1) J Chauvergne, (1); (1) Foundation Bergonie (Bordeaux), (2) Centre Rene Huguenin (Saint-Cloud), (3) Centre G. Francois Leclerc (Dijon), (4) Centre Oscar Lambret (Lille), (5) Service ORL CHU (Bordeaux) France.

Although the need for measuring the quality of life (QOL) of cancer patients receiving treatment has been widely recognized, few results have yet been published. Numerous reports have emphasized the potential benefit of induction chemotherapy regimens for treatment of advanced head and neck cancer. However, the influence on survival and on loco-regional control seems to be marginal. In these circumstances it is important to consider the effects of therapy on the QOL of such patients.

In order to evaluate the influence of induction chemotherapy on QOL, a randomized prospective trial in advanced head and neck cancer patients was initiated. Sixty-four patients were randomized to receive either standard treatment (defined as pre-operative irradiation followed by radical excision or irradiation alone) or induction chemotherapy, followed by standard treatment. Linear analogue self-assessment (LASA) scales and self-report questionnaires were used to estimate QOL. Several difficulties were encountered in data collection. Of 204 answers expected, only, 129 (63.2%) were collected and 125 were analysable. Of 51 evaluable patients, only 25 were evaluable for QOL before and at the end of the treatment. No difference has been shown between patients receiving chemotherapy and those receiving standard treatment alone.

In conclusion, assessment of QOL is an essential part of practice to evaluate the benefit of induction chemotherapy in advanced head and neck cancer patients. In our study it was not possible to show any improvement of QOL in these patients. Other studies are needed to demonstrate a positive or negative influence of chemotherapy on QOL. Those studies will however be very difficult to conduct.