



# Public Awareness of Oral Potentially Malignant Disorders (Oral Precancer) in Bengaluru, India: A Pilot Study

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### Background

To overcome/limit any disease or problem, public awareness is the key. Oral Leukoplakia (OLK) and Oral Submucous Fibrosis (OSMF) are the common oral potentially malignant disorders that have the potential to transform into Oral Squamous Cell Carcinoma (OSCC)<sup>1</sup>, which is the 6<sup>th</sup> most common malignant tumor in the world.<sup>2</sup> Morbidity and mortality associated with this disease are very high. Identifying OLK and OSMF would lead to a decrease in the prevalence of OSCC. Diagnosing the disease at its initial stage will prevent the morbidity and mortality associated with it. Awareness of these potentially malignant disorders should be high among the public for the patients to recognize them and report to the clinicians at the earliest for treatment and prevention of OSCC. This pilot study aims to emphasize the lack of awareness among the population and encourage private and government organizations to spread awareness among the public.

### Objective

The objective of this study was to assess the awareness of OLK and OSMF in the general public.

### Methodology

There was no attempt to sample the population, 102 consecutive people in and around Banashankari bus stop, Bengaluru, were interviewed on a one-to-one basis and were asked whether they were aware of OSMF and OLK. The questions were in the local language, Kannada. There were no attempts to stratify the sample according to education and economic status.

## Results

I. Total Number of Respondents- 102

I. Age of Participants: Average age 36.2 years

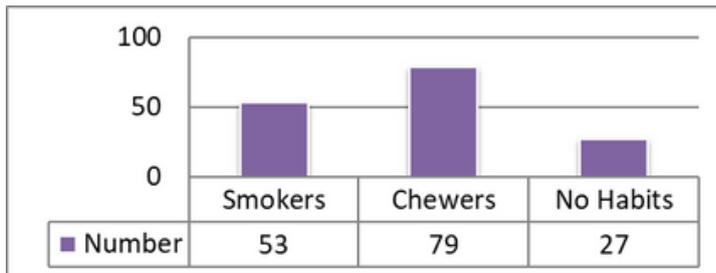
Age Range 18-72 years

About 60% of respondents were less than 35 years of age

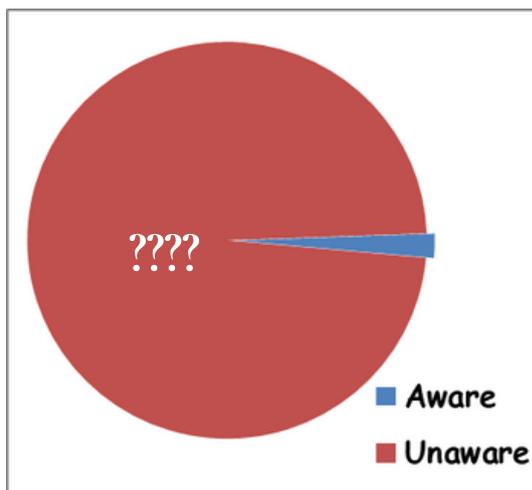
II. Gender of Participants: Respondents were predominantly male. (Only two females were among the respondents)

III. Tobacco consumption among respondents

Respondents with both smoking and chewing habits: 35



IV. Awareness of Precancer among respondents



98.04% of the participants were unaware of these lesions.

## Conclusion:

There is a high level of ignorance regarding potentially malignant disorders among the general public, especially tobacco users. The government and the private sectors should work hand in hand in spreading awareness of these potentially malignant disorders among the general public, which in turn would help in reducing the incidence of OSCC and reduce the burden of this disease on the individual and society.

## References

1. Narayan TV, The times they are a' changing - a perspective on oral precancer and cancer prevention. e-Journal of Dentistry Jan 2011 Vol 1 Issue 1.
2. Parkin DM, Pisani P, Ferlay J (1999). Estimates of the world incidence of 25 major cancers in 1990. Int J Cancer, 80, 827- 41.