

## A national epidemiological survey of oral mucosal lesions in Malaysia

Type: Article

Abstract:

The prevalence of oral mucosal lesions in Malaysia was determined by examining a representative sample of 11 707 subjects aged 25 years and above throughout the 14 states over a period of 5 months during 1993/1994. A two-stage stratified random sampling was undertaken. A predetermined number of enumeration blocks, the smallest population unit in the census publication was selected from each state. With the selected enumeration block, a systematic sample of living quarters was chosen with a random start. The survey instrument included a questionnaire on sociodemographic characteristics and a clinical examination. The clinical examination was carried out by 16 specially trained dental public health officers and the diagnosis calibrated with a final concordance rate of 92%. The age in the sample ranged from 25 to 115 years with a mean of 44.5+14.0. The sample comprised 40.2% males and 59.8% females; 55.8% were Malays, 29.4% Chinese, 10.0% Indians and 1.2% other ethnic groups. Oral mucosal lesions were detected in 1131 (9.7%) subjects. 5 (0.04%) had oral cancer, 165 (1.4%) had lesions or conditions that may be precancerous (leukoplakia, erythroplakia, submucous fibrosis and lichen planus) and 187 (1.6%) had betel chewer's mucosa. The prevalence of oral precancer was highest amongst Indians (4.0%) and other Bumiputras (the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak) (2.5%) while the lowest prevalence was amongst the Chinese (0.5%).

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Source	Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology
ISSN	0301-5661
DOI	10.1111/j.1600-0528.1997.tb00959.x
Volume	25
Page	377-383
Year	October 1997

Keyword:

oral cancer; oral mucosal lesions; oral precancers; epidemiology; prevalence; population; villagers; smoking

Please Cite As:

ZAIN, R. B., IKEDA, N., RAZAK, I. A., AXELL, T., MAJID, Z. A., GUPTA, P. C. & YAACOB, M. 1997. **A national epidemiological survey of oral mucosal lesions in Malaysia.** *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 25, 377-383.

URL:

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- <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1600-0528.1997.tb00959.x/abstract>
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