

The Oral Cancer Risk Test: an improved approach to early oral cancer detection and prevention

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Introduction

Oral cancer is the 8th and 13th most common cancer in the world for males and females respectively. This disease is more common in disadvantaged groups, who have higher rates of known risk factors, including smoking, drinking and low dental care access. Oral cancer is difficult to detect, remaining undiagnosed until well advanced. The prognosis is therefore often poor, with severe health and economic impacts for patients and their families.

Aims

This project aims to:

- assess the Oral Cancer Risk Test's (OCRT) ability to differentiate between patients who are known to have oral cancer and patients who do not; and
- detect patients with early stage oral cancer or high risk of developing this disease

Rationale

With earlier diagnosis, treatment and prognosis is enormously improved. People at high risk of developing oral cancer will be encouraged to modify their risk behaviours, and so may never develop this disease. The OCRT examines for oral cancer and future disease risks. This early intervention strategy will significantly reduce oral cancer health and economic impacts.

Methodology

Participating dentists will use a tablet device to input data from the OCRT, including a photo of the completed saliva test, the oral exam and the behaviour risk assessment. Patients with potentially cancerous oral lesions will have appropriate clinical investigation and follow up.

What are the expected outcomes?

It is anticipated this project will:

- have enormous impact in oral cancer risk assessment and oral cancer outcomes; and
- reduce the health and economic impacts of oral cancer.

