

PATIENTS WITH ORAL CANCER IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OF SERBIA

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Background: Patients with oral cancer have a significantly impaired quality of life and in Serbia they are among the ten most common tumours in male population.

Methods and Objectives: The aim of this study was to determine the recognition of this population group in the health care system in Serbia. During the June 2024 a review and analysis of relevant health policies, strategies, programs and other documents related to health in the Republic of Serbia, was undertaken.

Results: According to the Law on Health Insurance, these patients have the right to full coverage of costs for examinations and treatment of teeth and mouth diseases as part of the preoperative and postoperative treatment, as well as rehabilitation with post-resection prostheses. The measures and activities of currently active programs for prevention and early detection of certain types of tumours and the National Program of Preventive Dental Health Care (2009) do not recognize this population group as a priority. Given that a third of these tumours are caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection, the availability of this vaccine in our country is significant. Since 2006 the HPV vaccine has been available in Serbia, since 2019 it is on the list of recommended vaccines by the National Immunization Program, and since 2022 it is available through health insurance fund. Policies and strategies that target commercial determinants, such as alcohol and tobacco, are receiving increasing attention at the national level, in recent years.

Conclusions: In the observed Serbian population, despite a good dental health care coverage there are plenty of space to improve actions and measures to prevent oral cancer.

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