

"BCL-2 AND ORAL SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA. AN OVER-ESTIMATED CORRELATION?"

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Introduction: Despite last years advances in diagnostic and therapeutic possibilities in oral oncology, oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) remains an extremely aggressive tumour, characterized by an high rate of early local and nodal recurrence with an epidemiological increasing trend in industrialized nations. Recent evidences suggest that bcl-2 expression could be related with the aggressivity of OSCC and that it could be useful in defining different prognosis-related subgroups among OSCC patients population.

Material and methods: A not homogeneous sample of 29 patients (18 males, 11 females, age range: 36-85) affected by OSCC, surgically treated in our Institution from January 2003 to January 2007, was enrolled in the study. Patients were retrospectively evaluated according the following variables: histological grading, TNM staging, AJCC staging and immunohistochemically for bcl-2 expression.

Results: Tumors were classified as T1 in 7 cases, T2 in 6, T3 in 11, T4a in 5; nodal involvement was N2 in 13 patients, N1 in 6, and 10 patients had no nodal metastases. 12 patients were classified as IVa, 9 as III, 4 as II and 4 as I. Histological grading was: G1 in 3 patients, G2 in 19 and G3 in 7. Immunohistochemistry for bcl-2 in carcinoma cells was negative in all cases.

Conclusions: Negativity of bcl-2 expression in a not-homogenous population rises some doubts about the applicability of this marker in defining specific sub-groups of patients with OSCC. Further researches are needed, but bcl-2 do not seem to do be a reliable marker for OSCC.