

Global Oral Cancer Diploma Program (collaborative initiative of AO CMF & IAOO)

1. Background

Oral cancer is managed by different surgical disciplines such as Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Otolaryngology, Surgical Oncology, and Plastic Surgery. Each of these specialties has a different focus and this allows the opportunity to learn from other specialties which has enriched this subspecialty.

There are significant variations in the quality and levels of care and training in the field of oral oncology available in various parts of the globe. In addition, there are no global standardized training programs across different disciplines to manage this neoplasm. Hence a standardized program to train surgeons in the field of oral oncology is an unmet need.

With the rapid adoption of digital communication in the post-COVID scenario and increasing sophistication of online education, there is an opportunity to address these lacunae on a global scale with the development of an online educational portal for the purpose.

2. Goal of the program

It is the intention to provide to the community of clinicians treating oral cancer a structured educational program that addresses the variability in practice, different clinical pathways, caseload differences (treatment, confidence level), and patient demographics. The program offers surgeons (active or in training) evidence-based knowledge and non-technical skills that conform with the current standard of care in oral cancer. This we envisage will lead to a Diploma (certificate of completion) in Oral Oncology for those who have successfully completed the training, awarded jointly by AO Foundation and IAOO.

3. Target audience for the program

This program is targeted at surgeons already enrolled in a head and neck surgery or oral oncology training program or practicing surgeons with different backgrounds (MaxFac, H&N, General Surgeons, Otolaryngologists, Plastic Surgeons) who treat patients with oral cancer and want to certify or update their knowledge in this field.

4. The Program

The program envisions to have a structured online learning program over a maximum period of one year, for participants to gain substantial knowledge of the subject and non-technical skills. Further to the completion of all the program elements, participants must complete a summative assessment to receive a diploma. This education program on oral cancer is designed, organized, and executed in close collaboration between IAOO and AO CMF.

Learning pathway includes:

- Online modules: 10 modules delivered on a Learning Management System in the form of webinars, virtual meetings/discussions, interactive lectures & videos.
- Weekly discussion forums moderated by renown content experts
- bibliography (links only)
- Assessment: continuous online pre- post module assessment and weekly assessment to test your knowledge

Appendix I: Short outline Online Program Modules

- **Etiology and prevention (duration 3 weeks)**

Competency: Describe and apply strategies for identifying oral potentially malignant lesions and preventing oral cancer

Key learning Objectives:

- Describe cellular and molecular basis of oral carcinogenesis (k)
- Recognize the effect of diet, tobacco, alcohol, betel, HPV, maladaptation of protheses in OC development (k)
- Define natural history of oral potentially malignant lesions (k)
- Identify the spectrum of oral PML (Potentially malignant lesions) (k)
- Describe methods of diagnosing PML and oral cancer (k)
- Evaluate the usefulness of diagnostic adjuncts of oral cancer (incl. early detection) (k)
- Describe the principles and limitations of screening strategies (k)
- Explain the concept of chemo prevention (k)
- Outline the management of PML (k)
- Apply laser for PML management (s in fellowship)
- Discuss role of laser therapy in the management of PMLs
- Apply photo dynamic therapy for the management of PMLs (s in fellowship)
- Discuss role of photo dynamic therapy in the management of PMLs
- How to work with other healthcare providers (e.g. primary, dental practitioners) (a)
- Communicate risk factors to patient (a)
- Outline public prevention policies around the world (K)
- Discuss WHO recommendations and policies (K)

- **Epidemiology, Clinical Research and Biostatistic (duration 3 weeks)**

Competency: Describe the epidemiology and biostatistical methods related to oral cancer and apply them to your practice

Key learning Objectives:

- Define global incidence and prevalence of oral cancer (K)
- State the typical age, socioeconomic background, rate of tobacco and alcohol abuse of presenting patients (K)
- Understand the DALY (disability adjusted life year) index (K)

- Explain principles of evidence-based medicine (K)
 - Describe elements of measurement tools (outcome measures) (K)
 - Introduce and interpret measurements for survival analysis (e.g. Kaplan-Meier survival analysis, DSS, DFS, OS, PFS) (technical information including case example + challenges) (S)
 - Interpret measurements for quality of life and functional outcome analysis (S)
 - Apply basic statistics (S)
 - Apply clinical research methodology (S)
 - Promote health management concepts in your practice (A)
 - Practice evidenced-based medicine (A)
- **Communication (duration 4 weeks)**
 Competency 1: Identify and address communication challenges specific to care of oral cancer patients
 - Describe potential/common communication challenges related to patient care in oral cancer.
 - Recognize principles of active listening and effective communication and how they apply to your oral cancer care setting
 - Set the scene (environment)
 - Communicate clinician availability for the patient
 - Engage patient and family in decision making
 - Respect the patient's and family's perspective and choices
 - Conduct difficult conversations with patients and family (eg, diagnosis, prognosis, recurrence, functional and emotional impact, changes to facial appearance, death)
 - Recognize the value of patient counselling and available options
 - Respect diversity, cultural beliefs, and social values
 - Competency 2: Communication strategies in broad multidisciplinary teams
 - Develop a shared team approach in communicating with patients (Medical and support services)
 - Respect all opinions of multidisciplinary team members
 - Identify strategies in conflict resolution within multidisciplinary teams
 - Develop mutual team support
- **Diagnosis & workup (duration ~1 month)**
 Competency: Ensure accurate diagnosis and perform a comprehensive workup for oral cancer patient
 - Learning objectives need to be reviewed by Module editors
 - **Staging & outcome evaluation (duration ~1 month)**
 Competency: Accurately stage oral cavity cancer
 - Learning objectives need to be reviewed by Module editors

- **Treatment planning (duration ~1 month)**

Competency: Develop the plan and appropriate recommendations for treatment

- Learning objectives need to be reviewed by Module editors

- **Surgery (duration 12 weeks)**

Competency: Plan and perform surgery

Surgical Principles

Surgical procedures

Reconstruction Procedures

Post operative care

- **Adjuvant treatment (duration ~2 weeks)**

Competency: Describe the principles of adjuvant treatment

- Learning objectives need to be reviewed by Module editors

- **Post-treatment management & survivorship (duration ~2 weeks)**

Competency: Prevent and manage post treatment sequelae and recognize the importance of survivorship

- Learning objectives need to be reviewed by Module editors

- **Surveillance and Salvage treatment (duration 4 weeks)**

Competency: Diagnose and manage recurrent disease and secondary malignancies

- Learning objectives need to be reviewed by Module editors