

# headandneck 5000

## **Gustatory Function Following Treatment for Head and Neck Cancer: Results from Head and Neck 5000**

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### **Scientific Outline**

#### **Summary**

The incidence of head and neck cancer (HNC) is rising, with the majority of patients requiring radiotherapy (RT) as either primary or multimodality treatment. Technical advances in surgical technique, the use of intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) and the addition of concomitant chemotherapy have all led to improved survival outcomes for HNC however radical treatment continues to carry the burden of late toxicity and morbidity.

Patients frequently complain of taste dysfunction following completion of treatment and in the months and years that follow. However, there are no large prospective studies reporting the prevalence of patient-reported taste dysfunction (PRTD). Data from the Head and Neck 5000 Study offers unique insight into this commonly reported, yet relatively under-researched toxicity.

This project aims to describe the prevalence of PRTD in people with HNC undergoing radical treatment. The primary objective will explore the prevalence of PRTD in people with oropharyngeal and oral cavity cancer undergoing radical RT. Data relevant to taste function will be extracted from the EORTC QLQ-H&N35 at baseline and at all follow-up points to date. Secondary analysis will include analysis of PRTD in all tumour subsites and investigate a breadth of socio-demographic, lifestyle, clinical and treatment-related predictors of PRTD. In further analysis, PRTD will be correlated with other patient reported outcomes including xerostomia, weight loss, problems enjoying meals, dietary habits and overall quality of life.

This research will inform further prospective studies regarding gustatory function in the HNC population with a view to exploring solutions to reduce loss of taste for future patients.

**Keywords:** Head and neck cancer, radiotherapy, surgery, chemotherapy, taste, quality of life