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Oral pseudomembranous candidiasis, herpes simplex virus-1 infection, and oral mucositis in head and neck cancer patients receiving radiotherapy and granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) mouthwash

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Abstract

Oral pseudomembranous candidiasis (OPC) was evaluated in 61 patients receiving head and neck radiotherapy (RT). Herpes simplex virus-1 (HSV-1) reactivation was also investigated in 14 patients. According to the agreed protocol, granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) mouthwash was administered in 46 patients with radiation-induced ulcers. Candidiasis was diagnosed in 31 patients. Candida albicans was the most frequent isolate. Multiple Candida species were isolated from the lesions of four patients. Concurrent candidiasis and radiation-induced ulcers were observed in 17 patients. Viral culture and the polymerase chain reaction disclosed the presence of HSV-1 in five patients. Twenty of the 46 patients, with initial mucositis grade II and grade III, completed RT with mucositis grade I, indicating a beneficial effect of GMCSF mouthwash, although further controlled studies are necessary to verify that. In conclusion, OPC was an important infection in patients undergoing radiotherapy. The role of HSV-1 in oral mucositis during head and neck radiotherapy needs additional study.

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