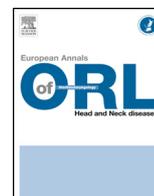




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Editorial

Less alcohol, more fruit and veg!–Spread the word



According to the FRANCIM network, based on data from local registries in France, in 2017 in France cancer was diagnosed in 214,000 male and 185,000 female subjects, with pharyngeal, oral cavity and/or laryngeal origin in 10,950 males and 4,350 females (<http://invs.santepubliquefrance.fr/Dossiers-thematiques/Maladies-chroniques-et-traumatismes/Cancers/Surveillance-epidemiologique-des-cancers/Estimations-de-l-incidence-de-la-mortalite-et-de-la-survie-stade-au-diagnostic/Projections-de-l-incidence-et-de-la-mortalite-par-cancer-en-France-metropolitaine-en-2017-Tumeurs-solides>).

Although smoking was directly implicated in more than 70% of cases and human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is a recognized factor for oropharyngeal (and also laryngeal and oral cavity) cancer, implicated in 12% of cases, research by the epidemiologist Catherine Hill [1] and her team demonstrated that prevention should not be restricted to combating these two risk factors.

Alcohol is not merely a cofactor with smoking in the origin of cancer of the oral cavity, pharynx and larynx [1], but also an independent and dose-dependent factor, with risk increasing 3-fold in those consuming 50–70 grams of pure alcohol per day and 12-fold for doses of 125–140 grams [1], making it the second most serious risk factor, involved in 46% of cases. Just like cessation of smoking, withdrawal from alcohol reduces the risk of onset of oral cavity, laryngeal or pharyngeal cancer, although benefit is slower to be felt [1]: it takes almost 20 years for an ex-smoker's risk of head and neck cancer to reach that of a never-smoker, while the equivalent period for alcohol is 25 years [1].

Diet is also a primordial factor: risk of onset of head and neck cancer is higher with diets including less than 300 grams of fruit and 300 grams of non-feculent vegetables per day [1]. Two-thirds of the population in France are concerned by these two “deficits”, implicated in the onset of 16% of oral cavity, pharyngeal and

laryngeal cancers, making them the third most serious risk factor, ahead of HPV [2]. Shield et al. [2] reported that consuming only 200 grams of fruit per day incurred 5% extra risk and that consuming only 200 grams of non-feculent vegetables per day incurred 14% extra risk.

These recent epidemiological data give ENT physicians yet another reason to spread the word to their patients: “Eat five fruits and vegetables a day”, in the words of the slogan of the National Nutrition and Health Program launched in 2001 by the French ministry of Health (<http://www.mangerbouger.fr/PNNS>).

Disclosure of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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