

Intra-Oral Cancer Awareness Amongst Speech and Language Therapists in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom



Katie Burke¹, Dr Claire Healy², Dr Julie Regan¹

¹ Department of Clinical Speech and Language Studies, Trinity College Dublin

² School of Dental Science, Trinity College Dublin

Background

- The prevalence of IOC is increasing worldwide
- IOC is a highly lethal disease, with a 50% survival rate after 5 years
- Early IOC detection is critical to clinical and quality of life outcomes
- SLT role in the early detection of IOC is overlooked

Research Questions

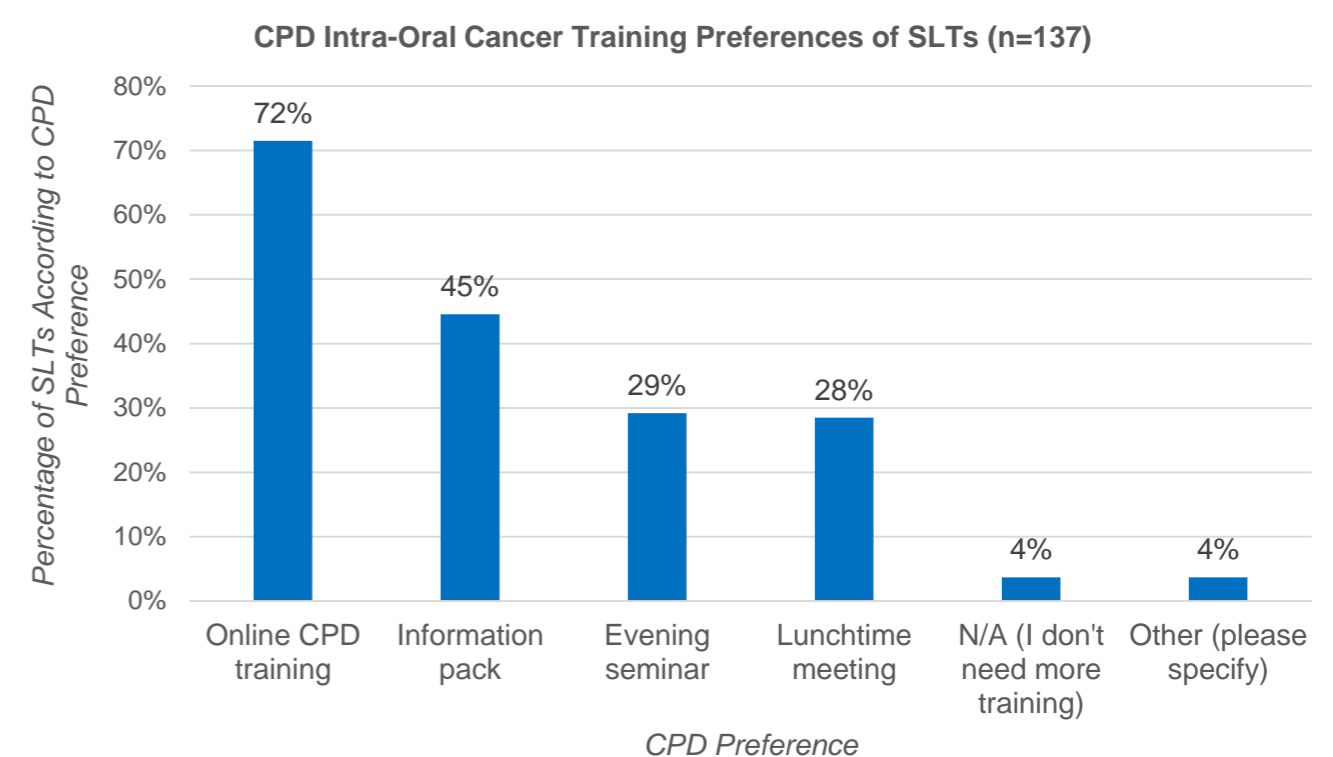
- What is IOC awareness amongst SLTs in the ROI and UK?
- What are current SLT practice patterns in relation to early IOC detection?




Methods

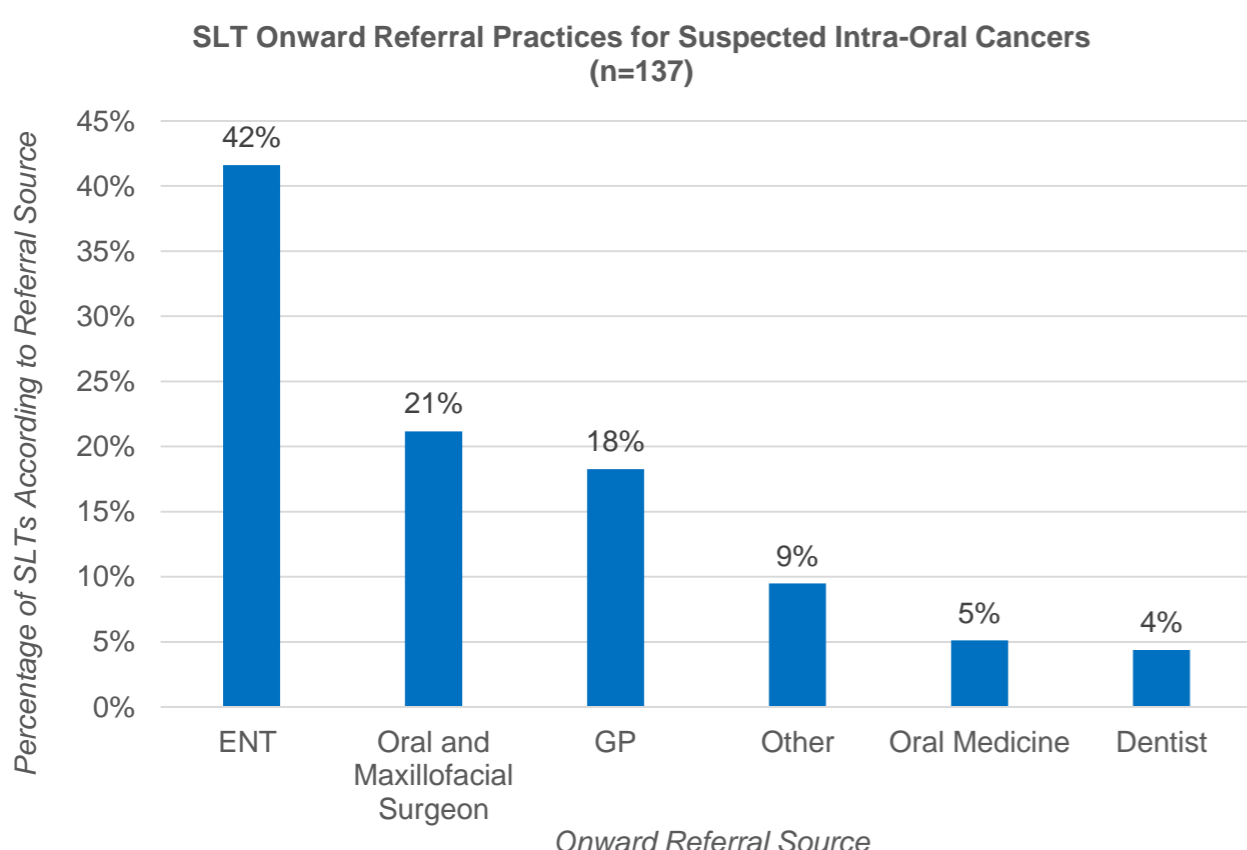
- 42-item online survey created in www.surveymonkey.com
- Survey divided into sections on (i) demographics; (ii) identification of intra-oral presentations; (iii) current practices and (iv) training needs.
- Shared by professional associations and social media to SLTs working in the ROI and UK.
- The survey was hosted online for ten weeks.
- Data was analysed using descriptive statistics

Results

- 146 SLTs responded to the survey
- 99% (136/137) consider the SLT to have a key role in identifying and referring potential IOCs
- 88% of SLTs in the ROI (89/101) 64% in the UK (23/36) reported that no onward IOC referral care pathway exists in their work setting
- 94% (129/137) of respondents regularly conduct oro-facial examinations in clinical practice, highlighting a missed opportunity for opportunistic IOC screening
- Ability to detect benign intra-oral presentations was consistently less than 35%



Presentation	ROI: % Accurately Identified	UK: % Accurately Identified	Total: % Accurately Identified
Lateral Tongue Border SCC	5% (3/63)	32% (6/19)	11% (9/82)
			
Ventrolateral Tongue SCC	11% (6/55)	13% (2/15)	11% (8/70)
			
Retromolar Trigone SCC	10% (6/60)	18% (3/17)	12% (9/77)
			



Conclusions

- IOC awareness amongst SLTs is limited, possibly contributing to late detection in clinical practice, resulting in negative QOL and clinical outcomes.
- This survey serves as a starting point for future research in this area and has led to the development of an online IOC atlas tool for SLTs, developed on the Trinity College Dublin Dysphagia Centre website (see QR Code above) (<https://www.tcd.ie/slscs/clinical-speech-language/dysphagia/resources/atlas.php>)

Key References

- Carter, L.M. & Ogden, G.R. (2007). Oral cancer awareness of undergraduate medical and dental students. *BMC Medical Education*, 7(1), p.44.
- Shanahan, D., & Healy, C.M. (2017). Oral cancer Awareness of Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors in Irish Hospitals. *Irish Medical Journal*. Retrieved 8th March, 2018, at 18.23, from <http://imj.ie/oral-cancer-awareness-of-non-consultant-hospital-doctors-in-irish-hospitals/>.