

## **Experience in the use of sentinel lymph node in early oral cancer**

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**BACKGROUND:** Neck dissection is a highly effective method in the staging of lymph nodes in cancer of the oral cavity, but has the disadvantage of a high rate of morbidity. The use of sentinel lymph node technique has helped enormously to treat patient with oral cancer in early stages, reducing the adverse effects of traditional therapies. The objective of this project is to reproduce the international experience in two Chilean population centers: Clinica Alemana and the National Cancer Institute of Chile.

**METHODS:** Cooperative prospective study of two Chilean centers from October 2012 to December 2015. All patients with oral cancers T1 and T2, N0, M0 were included. Patients with previous cancer treatment (surgery or radiotherapy) in the region face and neck were excluded. All patients underwent Tc-nanocolloid injection the day before or the day of the surgery, according to standard protocols for lymphoscintigraphy in each center. In operation room, sentinel lymph nodes were identified with gamma probe and the standard neck dissection it was performed additionally. Then the relationship of pathological report of the lymph node sentinel was analyzed and contrasted with the rest of the neck dissection. Sensitivity, specificity, and NPV, PPV was measured.

**RESULTS:** Eighteen patients underwent lymphoscintigraphy. The detection rate of sentinel lymph node was 88%. The median tumor size was 8.3mm. The median depth of invasion was 5mm. The negative predictive value was 94.1% and positive predictive value was 100%.

**CONCLUSION:** The sentinel lymph node biopsy is reproducible in our centers and its use is recommended without neck dissection in patients with early oral cancer.