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Conformal and intensity modulated radiotherapy in head and neck cancer in South America

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Introduction: Head and neck carcinomas are a group of malignant tumors with a common location. Conformal Radiotherapy and Intensity Modulated Radiotherapy conform the dose and protect organs at risk. A descriptive study of patients with squamous cell carcinomas of the head and neck treated with these radiations techniques in South America was conducted.

Materials and methods: A retrospective observational study was realized. Cases were defined as adults with histology diagnosis of head and neck carcinoma in all stages, treated with Conformal Radiotherapy or Intensity Modulated Radiotherapy in the Instituto Nacional de Cancerología, Bogotá, D.C., between January 2005 and December 2012. Information about social, demographic, clinical variables, complications and outcomes were recorded. Kaplan-Meier test was done for overall and free-progression survival.

Results: 59 patients were included (69.5% men). 20 patients received 3DCRT and 39 patients received IMRT. The median total dose received was 66 Gy. 96.6% of patients presented acute complications during treatment. 100% of patients treated with 3DCRT and 94% of patients treated with IMRT presented any acute complication. 40% of patients treated with 3DCRT and 15.4% of patients treated with IMRT. More common toxicities were radiodermatitis and mucositis. 52.5% of patients have late complications. 50% patients in 3DCRT group and 51.3% patients in IMRT group have a complete response. Mean overall survival rate was 42.7 months (CI 95% 24.5-60.7 months) in 3DCRT patients and 46.4 months (CI 95% 37.4-55.4 months) in IMRT patients. Mean relapse free survival rate was 42.8 months (CI 95% 25.2 to 60.4 months) in 3DCRT patients and 59.9 months (CI 95% 25.2 to 60.4 months) in IMRT patients.

Conclusion: Patients with head and neck carcinomas treated in our center with 3DCRT or IMRT showed outcomes compared to others studies reported, prospective studies are still needed to proved benefit of IMRT over 3DCRT.

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