

SPARE-HN: Screening, Prevention & Awareness of Head & Neck Cancer

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BACKGROUND:

In 2022, over 110,000 new diagnoses of head and neck cancer (HNC) and a resultant 17,000 deaths occurred in the United States with the incidence projected to continue to increase. Within the Stanford Cancer Institute's (SCI) 10-county catchment area, the median age-adjusted incidence rate of HNC is 9.7 per 100,000 persons and several counties in particular have much higher rates of HNC than the catchment median and these also have high concentrations of persistent poverty areas (San Joaquin, Santa Cruz, and Stanislaus counties). There is limited access to dental care in these areas and many patients do not have the opportunity to obtain regular screenings with their dental exams that catch early mucosal changes. Our catchment area is also very diverse with large Hispanic and South East Asian populations that have a higher risk of head and neck cancer.

We have the opportunity support a head and neck cancer screening and education initiative at the Stanford Health Matters community fair. The purpose of our initiative is to educate the public on risk factors for and signs of head and neck cancer as well as conduct head and neck cancer screenings.

TARGET POPULATION:

Our target population includes adults attending the Stanford Health Matters fair, which draws from a diverse cross-section of the community. Educational materials will be available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese to ensure accessibility.

METHODS:

The project will consist of a booth at the Stanford Health Matters fair focused on providing educational materials and head and neck cancer screenings. We have a unique multidisciplinary team that has come together to offer this initiative. Our project was co-designed with a patient advocate, and we will have patients who are participating to help hand out educational materials. Head and neck surgical oncologists, dentists, and trained clinical volunteers will provide free focused head and neck examinations focusing on the oral cavity, oropharynx, and the neck lymph nodes. During the screening, participants will be educated on common risk factors oral cavity cancer in our population including tobacco, alcohol, and betel nut use. We will also educate the public on the unique risk factors for oropharyngeal cancer, particularly HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer. We will discuss HPV transmission, cancer risk, and vaccine eligibility. We will aim to address common misconceptions about the HPV vaccine and offer practical guidance on how to access vaccination through primary care providers or local community clinics.

At the end of the screening, we will have a prevention toolkit to provide participants that discusses risk factors and early signs and symptoms of head and neck cancer. This toolkit will be created with the assistance of our patient advocate who will also be present on the day of screening to educate and increase awareness. We will also have a card with tobacco cessation resources if participants are interested and a card with information about the HPV vaccine. We will have educational materials in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese to handout to participants after the screening. There will be a QR-code on the back of the materials with access to short

educational videos recorded by Stanford head and neck cancer specialists. The toolkit will also have lip balm and a toothbrush and toothpaste.

Participants will be educated on with concerning findings will receive facilitated referrals for follow-up evaluation within Stanford Health Care or affiliated community clinics to ensure continuity of care.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITY HEALTH:

The goal of this initiative to increase awareness of head and neck cancer and also offer head and neck screenings to about 100-120 participants throughout the day, based on prior Health Matters fair data. Head and neck cancers are frequently diagnosed at advanced stages, particularly in underserved populations. By embedding specialty screening within a community health fair, we can increase awareness and education with respect to head and neck cancers and are able to offer these patients a free head and neck cancer screen. Furthermore, through identifying patients with risk factors, we can direct them to additional resources (tobacco cessation, etc). Lastly, we aim to increase aware of HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer and discuss prevention through HPV vaccination. Together, these efforts support both secondary prevention through screening and education of early warning signs and primary prevention through vaccination and risk reduction counseling.

This project was initially proposed by a patient advocate (CB) with a passion for increasing awareness of head and neck cancer. Through co-designing the materials and project with patient input, we ensure that the materials are readable, effective, and accessible to the public. We hope that our message is made even more powerful by having the public see patients who have gone through this participate during the health fair.

BUDGET:

The total estimated cost of the project is \$1,000. Funds will be used for multilingual educational material printing, creation of a banner and posters, prevention toolkit materials, and screening supplies such as disposable examination materials and lighting. No indirect costs or salary support are requested, and all clinical time will be donated by participating physicians and volunteers. The Stanford Health Matters fair will provide venue infrastructure and general event support.

Item	Cost
Printing	100
Translation	200
Lip balm and toothpaste (120 people)	200
Banner and posters	300
Disposable tongue blades, reusable lights	200
Total	1000

OTHER FUNDING: No other funding is being used for this project.