Oral Manifestations of Cancer Treatment in Children: A Review of the Literature

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In Western countries, rising incidence and survival rates in childhood cancer have led to increased patient morbidity, including short- and long-term oral effects. Some acute oral complications occur three times more commonly in children than adults. This literature review sourced material from medical databases to discuss the acute and chronic oral complications of oncology treatment in children. The article explores caries, gingivitis, oral infections, and oral mucositis, as well as available tools for measuring their incidence, prevention, and treatment in children. Many tools and interventions appear to be available to prevent and treat oral complications of cancer treatment in children; however, they lack reliable and consistent research. Future research should use larger samples to report the incidence of oral complications, which would allow identification of children at increased risk. In addition, larger studies would provide baseline information to enable the construction of appropriate randomized clinical trials to test methods of prevention and proposed interventions for oral complications of cancer treatment in children.

At a Glance

- The mouth has been documented as the most common source of sepsis in immunosuppressed patients with cancer.
- Strategies for preventing and managing oral complications in adults have not been evaluated adequately in children.
- Implementation of a universally accepted standardized oral mucositis scale for pediatric patients is needed to improve patient care and advance clinical research.

implementing or sequence of a patient's dentition, a dental referral may be recommended for assessment. Dental lamina, the tissue from which teeth are derived, is evident from days 35–37 of embryonic life (Nery, Kraus, & Croup, 1970). Primary teeth begin calcification