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Abstract

DO YOU PRESCRIBE ALCOHOL TO YOUR **PATIENTS?**

The role of alcohol in oral carcinogenesis with particular reference to alcohol-containing mouthwashes. McCullough MJ, Farah CS. Australian Dental Journal 2008; 53: 302-305.

This paper reviews the literature relating to alcohol and oral cancer, and especially the limited published work on the effect of alcoholcontaining mouthwashes. It appears that, until recently, there was a known but not statistically significant aetiological connection. However, a recent paper by Guha et al, reporting an extensive study, has now shown a significant link between the daily use of alcoholcontaining mouthwashes and the disease. In conjunction with the twice daily use of these medicaments, those who were also smokers suffered a nine-fold (9.12) increase in their risk

of acquiring oral cancer, those who also drank alcohol suffered a five-fold (5.12) increase, and even patients with no other risk factor habits showed an increased risk of almost five times (4.96).

The authors point out that, whilst many of these products have been shown to be effective in penetrating oral biofilms and reducing bacterial load, it would be wise to restrict their use to short term therapeutic situations. Indeed, like other medication, mouthwashes should only be used under written and detailed prescription from a dental practitioner for short periods and specific reasons. They conclude that, in their opinion, it is inadvisable for healthcare professionals to recommend the long-term use of alcohol-containing mouthwashes.

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CPD ANSWERS

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1. A, B, C 6. A, D

2. A, C, D **7.** A, B, C

3. A, B 8. B D

4. A, B, C **9.** A, B, C

5. C, D **10.** B, C, D