

Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for controlling Oral Potential Malignant Disorders (OPMD) in Sri Lanka

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In Sri Lanka, breast cancer has the highest reported incidence among females, whereas the same for males is reported to be the cancers in the lip, oral cavity and pharynx. Majority of patients with oral cancer and OPMD are detected by dental surgeons and the suspected cases are referred to Oral and Maxillofacial units (OMF) in state hospitals. The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) of the Ministry of Health conducts surveillance of cancers in Sri Lanka. There are several pitfalls in the current manual paper-based oral cancer surveillance system which hinders the NCCP's performance in disease surveillance and control activities. The goal of the new system (SLOPMD) established in the Department of Oral Medicine and Periodontology, Faculty of Dental Sciences, University of Peradeniya is to strengthen OPMD surveillance using ICT. The SLOPMD (www.slopmd.com) surveillance system has been designed in three phases. Phase I is designed to use the retrospective data available at the Department and Phase II is upgraded for prospective data collection. Phase III will connect countrywide OMF clinics to the system providing a key improvement in the current perspectives of oral cancer surveillance in Sri Lanka. The vision of using Health Informatics for public health is to improve the high value data, information, and knowledge to be exchanged in a secure and timely manner. World Health Organization has stated that reporting of notifiable diseases by making use of modern communication technology and reporting of statistics is advancing. The SLOPMD system will serve as a key web-based method and one of the core indicators of the country's health performance. As a developing country, Sri Lanka needs to deliver quality health care to its citizens and to improve cancer surveillance in Sri Lanka.