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An overview of pediatric oral and throat cancer

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Cancer of the head and neck is relatively uncommon in the pediatric population however in children certain tumors have a predilection for those sites. In adults, alveolar soft parts sarcoma is common in the lower extremities but in children, most occur in the orbit and tongue. Salivary gland tumors may also arise in oral cavity. Of the 15 children diagnosed with mucoepidermoid carcinoma at Children's Hospital Los Angeles since 1990, 3 were in the palate. Thankfully, most mucoepidermoid carcinomas in children are low grade. The Mastermind-like 2 (MAML2) gene rearrangements commonly seen in mucoepidermoid carcinoma is specific and portends a favorable prognosis. Other carcinomas of the salivary glands such as acinic cell carcinoma and adenoid cystic carcinoma also occur in children and do arise in minor salivary glands. Sialoblastoma is a rare primitive congenital salivary gland neoplasm that most frequently arises in the parotid gland however they do occur in the oral cavity. As recently as 2011, Safari reported a case of congenital sialoblastoma arising in a minor salivary gland of the buccal mucosa of a newborn. Melanotic Neuroectodermal Tumor of Infancy (MNTI) is a rare pigmented tumor of neural crest origin most commonly found in the maxilla. Rhabdomyosarcoma, Burkitt lymphoma and chloroma also have a tendency to arise in the oral cavity. NUT midline carcinoma, caused by a translocation of the NUT and BRD genes may also affect the mouth. Viruses like HPV and EBV may induce pediatric head and neck malignancies such as squamous carcinoma and lymphoepithelioma respectively.

Biography

Nick M Shillingford is a Pediatric Pathologist at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), USA and an Assistant Professor of Pathology at the University of Southern California. He is also an Associate Director of the Pediatric Pathology Fellowship. He is a member of the Education Committee of the Society for Pediatric Pathology and the Slide Survey Subcommittee where he writes questions for the CME based Slide Survey Online Program. He is trained in Anatomic Pathology at the State University of New York. He completed a Surgical/Gastrointestinal Pathology fellowship at Brown University and did his Pediatric Pathology Training at Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School.

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