

# KNOWLEDGE OF HEAD AND NECK CANCER AND SMOKING BEHAVIOR IN A HIGH-RISK POPULATION IN INDONESIA

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**Abstract.** The study assessed knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes toward head and neck cancer in Indonesia, a country with the highest male smoking prevalence in the world. A survey was administered to Indonesian men ( $n = 98$ ) who were either current or former smokers, at a waiting room of a university hospital in Makassar, South Sulawesi to assess knowledge of head and neck cancer. Ages ranged from 21-73 years and education level ranged from no education to doctorate degree. Knowledge scores ranged from 0-71% correct (median = 29% correct). There were no statistical differences in knowledge scores among men of different ages, religious affiliations, education levels, or smoking status, but participants who perceived cancer risk from smoking had significantly higher scores ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). There was no significant difference in knowledge scores between patients with and without head and neck cancer. Only 37% of participants believed they were at risk for developing head and neck cancer, even though 82% correctly identified smoking as a risk factor. All participants reported that they would seek medical treatment if diagnosed with head and neck cancer and 73% reported they would consider quitting smoking following a positive screening. In conclusion, the study highlights the need for increased public head and neck cancer awareness, education of health care providers, community screenings, and tobacco cessation programs targeting high-risk populations.

**Keywords:** cancer awareness, head and neck cancer, Indonesian male adult, smoking

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