

**OP7: Anaemia in cancer: not an innocent onlooker**

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**Introduction:** Anaemia is observed frequently in cancer patients even when the tumour is in an early stage, and correction of haemoglobin (Hb) is done before curative radiotherapy (RT) to overcome any worsening effect.

**Objective:** To assess the impact of pre-treatment anaemia on treatment outcome of early stage carcinoma of larynx by RT.

**Design, setting and methods:** A retrospective, chart review analysis on stages I/II laryngeal cancer patients managed at Regional Cancer Centre, Kandy, between 2001-05 was done. The inclusion criteria were: well differentiated squamous cell cancers, had undergone an optimal staging procedure, absence of a co-morbid illness causing anaemia and a 50-70 years age group of either sex. Those subjects who had pre-treatment Hb <12 g/dl were the test group, and >12 g/dl were controls. The end point of the study was biopsy proven absence of tumour at three months after treatment. The chi-square test was used to compare the response rates of the two cohorts of patients.

**Results:** 106 patients fulfilled the inclusion criteria. M:F ratio= 8:1. The treatment failure rates were 66% versus 5% in test and control groups respectively ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Conclusion:** Pre-treatment anaemia cannot be overlooked as innocent. These data indicate that it is a sign of aggressive disease with a risk of treatment failure.