

36th International Conference on

DENTISTRY & DENTAL MARKETING

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18th Annual Meeting on

ORAL CARE & ORAL CANCER October 24- 25, 2018 | Boston, USA

Betel nut chewing in the greater New York/New Jersey area: Any consequence

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According to the NYU Center for the study of Asian American Health, the New York City Metropolitan area is home to the largest concentration of South Asians in the United States. The chewing of "betel nut" and related products is common to these immigrants from countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives among others. Betel quid and its constituent areca nut are known risk factors for many oral and esophageal cancers. However, the lack of awareness regarding adverse effects of the areca nut among its users, limited understanding of its cultural role among healthcare providers and lack of global policy for control of the substance has resulted in what has been termed a global public health emergency. Within a six-month period from October 2017 to March 2018, three cases of oral squamous cell carcinoma among the South Asian immigrant population have been diagnosed at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson, NJ and treated using wide local excision and reconstructive flap surgery. In each case, the patient admitted to a history of ten or more years of betel nut chewing. Considering these cases, the purpose of this article is to report on the incidence of oral squamous cell carcinoma in the greater New York and New Jersey area secondary to betel nut use.

Biography

Sneha Shah completed her DMD at the age of 26 years from Rutgers School of Dental Medicine graduating in the top quarter of her class. During an internship in oral and maxillofacial surgery at St Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson, NJ, she was involved in the diagnosis and treatment of numerous patients who developed oral squamous cell carcinoma in the setting of a longstanding history of betel nut chewing. She is currently in her first year of OMFS residency and maintains an interest in the demographics and management of oral cancer.

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