7. CONCLUSIONS
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1. Epidemiological studies have shown that there is an overall reduction in the oral cavity cancers in India. This may be attributed to the decreased prevalence of tobacco use. The increase in tongue cancer incidence may suggest factors other than tobacco and alcohol in its genesis.

2. Human Papilloma Virus plays a major role in tongue carcinogenesis. Forty eight percent of the tongue cancer samples were positive for HPV16. Eighty-three percent showed integration. Both E6-p53 and E7-pRb pathways are involved in carcinogenesis with a preponderance of the later. Koilocytosis alone could not be recommended as a screening method.

3. The assessment of awareness of oral cancer in a high-risk population revealed that the overall awareness of oral cancer and its risk factors was satisfactory, though gaps exist stressing the need for targeted health education and risk factors cessation counseling.

4. It is identified that oral self-examination is a potential cost-effective health education and screening tool to improve awareness of oral cancer in a high-risk community.