

# Rola czynników egzogennych i epidemiologicznych w etiologii raków płaskonabłonkowych głowy i szyi u młodych dorosłych

The role of exogenous and epidemiological factors in etiology of squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck in young adults

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## Summary

Squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck (HNSCC) is the malignant tumor arising most frequently in non-keratinized epithelial tissue of the upper part of the respiratory or gastrointestinal tracts. These tumors develop most commonly in the sixth or seventh decade of life and significantly less frequently in patients younger than 45 years defined as young adults. In literature, there are still many controversies concerning the origin of these tumors in this group of patients. **Aim:** To estimate the role of exogenous and epidemiological factors in etiology of HNSCC in young adults. **Material and methods:** The study group consisted of 95 young adults (< 45 years) with HNSCC and the control group of 95 older patients (> 45 years) with HNSCC, who were treated in the Department of Otolaryngology and Laryngological Oncology of Karol Marcinkowski University of Medical Sciences in Poznań during the period 2000-2004. The analysis was based on etio-logical questionnaires and the medical records of patients. **Results and conclusions:** 1. A significant role of typical exogenous factors (active and passive exposure to tobacco smoke and alcohol abuse) was established in the etiology of HNSCC in young adults. 2. Daily active exposure to tobacco smoke in young adults is nearly the same as in older patients, but daily passive exposure is higher than in older patients. 3. Significantly higher alcohol consumption in young adults than in older patients, found in this study, may be one of the reasons of HNSCC onset in young age. 4. Occupational exposure to the HNSCC causative factors in young adults is not higher than in older patients. 5. A frequency of familial cancer in young adults with HNSCC seems to be higher than in older patients, but further observations are needed.