

Empowered Survivor:

Developing an Online Platform for Oral Cancer Survivors with CINJ

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Introduction:

- The physicians and researchers of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) have the mission to help individuals fight cancer
- Dr. Manne's team at CINJ conduct various behavioral studies to help patients and survivors of cancer
- The Empowered Survivor Project aims to create an online platform for oral/oropharyngeal cancer survivors with modules that encourage survivorship self care and a community for encouragement

Objective of Internship

- To participate in behavioral research involving human participants and develop skills required for such work
- To learn about the major difficulties of oral/oropharyngeal cancer patients and the challenges survivors face

Work Profile

- Create resources for study participants in cases of elevated levels of distress during study participation
- Compile and Compare different national health surveys to help create a cancer catchment survey for the Big10 Schools
- Contact study participants via phone call for reminders to ensure study timeline runs smoothly

Reflections:

Calling Study Participants:

- I was able to develop communication skills as a researcher with study participants. I particularly learned how to approach conversations with oral cancer survivors who may not be comfortable with speech.
- Interacting with the study participants helped me reinforce my motivation for work, as I was reminded of how Empowered Survivor could help oral/oropharyngeal cancer survivors.

Becoming Familiar with Public Health Studies

HEAD AND NECK

DEFINITION OF ANATOMIC SITES WITHIN THE HEAD AND NECK

Note: Not all sites in the lip, oral cavity, pharynx and salivary glands are listed below. All sites to which a Summary Stage chapter applies are listed at the beginning of the chapter.

LIP, ORAL CAVITY and PHARYNX
The oral cavity extends from the skin-vestibulum junction of the lips to the junction of the hard and soft palate above and to the line of circumvallate papillae below.

LIP AND ORAL CAVITY

Site	ICD-O	Description
LIPS	C00_	Vermilion surface, mucosal lip, labial (mucosa) upper and lower, form the upper and lower anterior wall of the oral cavity. They consist of an exposed surface of modified epidermis beginning at the junction of the vermillion border with the skin and including only the vermillion surface or that portion of the lip that meets the opposing lip. The lips extend from commissure to commissure.
COMMISSURE OF LIP	C06	(corner of mouth) is the point of union of upper and lower lips and is part of the lip
ANTERIOR 2/3 OF TONGUE	C02_	(mobile or oral tongue) consists of the freely movable portion of the tongue which extends anteriorly from the line of circumvallate papillae to the root of the tongue at the junction of the floor of the mouth. It is composed of four areas: tip, lateral borders, dorsum, and undersurface or ventral surface (non-vilous surface). (upper alveolar ridge) is the covering mucosa of the alveolar process of the maxilla, extending from the line of attachment of mucosa in the upper gingival buccal gutter to the junction of the hard palate. Its posterior margin is the upper end of the pterygopalatine arch.
UPPER GUM	C030	

'Summary Stage 2018: Head and Neck' provided by the NIH 'California Cancer Registry Research Data Dictionary' by UC Davis Health

- I became familiar with the different classifications of oral/oropharyngeal cancer causes and how race/ethnicity is reported in such studies
- Having previously worked in an oncology lab, it was interesting to see how population studies and public health approaches cancer to help patients/survivors

Personal Development

- Having multiple projects at once, I was also able to develop skills in time management and prioritization
- Having a log to reflect on my weekly experiences helped me understand what type of work I enjoy and how I work best
- Although the internship was virtual, all team members were efficient with communication and supportive

California Cancer Registry Data Dictionary

Variable Name: RACE1
Eureka Name: Race 1
NAACCR Item: 160
Category: Patient Demographics
Level of Variable: Patient
Time Period Available: 1988 - current year
Related Variables:

- Race 2 (RACE2)
- Race 3 (RACE3)
- Race 4 (RACE4)
- Race 5 (RACE5)
- Race/Ethnicity of Patient (RACEGROUP)

Definition: Race/ethnicity of the patient.
Notes: For additional information, please see Appendix "Variables Pertaining to Race/Ethnicity in the CCR".
Values:

- 01: White
- 02: Black
- 03: American Indian, Aleutian, or Eskimo
- 04: Chinese
- 05: Japanese
- 06: Filipino
- 07: Hawaiian
- 08: Korean

Looking ahead:

I am excited about the positive impact Empowered Survivor will bring to help oral/oropharyngeal cancer survivors and help improve their quality of life

Questions:

I am curious whether survivors of different race/ethnicity have different feedback for Empowered Survivor, and whether such different experiences can be addressed to improve the content of Empowered Survivor.

Conclusion:

Working with Dr. Manne and her team was a rewarding experience as I was able to address oral/oropharyngeal cancer from a public health standpoint and develop various soft skills to be used in behavioral research. I am thankful for having had this opportunity.

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