

# Prevalence of head and neck cancer presenting at Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi.

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## **Abstract:**

Currently there is a dearth of data on the pattern of occurrence of head and neck cancers in Kenya. To provide a comprehensive analysis of the pattern of occurrence of head and neck cancers in a Kenyan population. Retrospective hospital-based descriptive study. Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi. A total of 793 cases were recorded consisting of 507 male and 286 female (M: F = 2:1). Most of the lesions arose from the upper aerodigestive pathway. The larynx was the most common site for aerodigestive malignancies. This was followed in order of frequency, by the tongue, the mouth, and the nasopharynx. Outside the aerodigestive pathway the eye was the most commonly affected site followed by the thyroid. Squamous cell carcinoma was the most common malignancy. Sarcomas were typically rare. Gender and age distribution showed an overall male preponderance and a wide age range. However, specific tumour sites and tumour types showed varying patterns of gender and age distribution. This study confirms the relative prominence of laryngeal, oral and nasopharyngeal cancers in the African population. It is, however, at variance with other African studies regarding the relative frequency of nasal and paranasal cancers.