

# Can Elective Tracheostomy be avoided in postoperative management of Oral cancer?

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## Background

In extensive oral cancer surgery, there is always a fear of airway in the mind of both surgeon and anesthetist. So, elective tracheostomy is widely practiced all over the world in this subset of patients.

But tracheostomy has its own complications and morbidity. In our department, elective tracheostomy has been avoided in majority of patients by keeping certain important factors in control during the perioperative period.

**Aim:** To assess the need of elective tracheostomy in oral cancer patients and discuss the measures taken to prevent it.

## Methods

A retrospectively cohort study was conducted on oral cancer patients treated with major surgical resection and reconstruction between January 2015 and January 2020.

The data was systematically collected for the defined parameters like demographic details, diagnosis, site, TNM staging, type of resection, reconstruction, tracheostomy performed, duration of hospital stay, etc.

## Results

A total of 36 patients were included in this study with mean age 51.8 years and male to female ratio 18:1.

Pectoralis major myocutaneous flap (33%) was the most common flap used for reconstruction followed by microvascular free flaps (17%).

Elective tracheostomy was avoided in all patients, by keeping them in close observation at ICU.

Only 2 patients (5.6%) had to undergo tracheostomy in the post operative period due to the inability to maintain oxygen saturation on extubation. Average hospital stay was 10.8 days

## Conclusion

Elective tracheostomy can be avoided in majority of oral cancer patients and this helps in avoiding the procedure-related complications and also decrease the overall stay of patient in the hospital.

## References

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- Mishra S, Bhatnagar S, Jha RR, et al. Airway management of patients undergoing oral cancer surgery: a retrospective study. Eur J Anaesthesiol. 2005;22(7):510-4.