

Metformin linked to lower risk of head, neck cancer

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(HealthDay)—Metformin is associated with a lower risk of developing head and neck cancer in patients with diabetes, according to a study published in the September issue of *Head & Neck*.

Yung-Chang Yen, M.D., Ph.D., from the Chi Mei Medical Centre in Tainan City, Taiwan, and colleagues compared the risk of [head](#) and [neck cancer](#) in 2011 among 66,600 patients, all newly diagnosed with [diabetes](#) in 2002. Metformin was subsequently taken by half of the patients. The two groups were matched for comorbidities, sex, and age.

The researchers found that the incidence of head and neck cancer was 34 percent lower in the metformin group than in the control group (adjusted hazard ratio [HR], 0.66). Similarly, among those taking metformin, the risks for oropharyngeal cancer (adjusted HR, 0.66) and nasopharyngeal carcinoma (adjusted HR, 0.5) were significantly lower.

"These findings indicate the potential clinical benefits of using metformin to prevent patients with diabetes from developing head and neck cancer," the authors write.

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