

Geographic variation in HPV oropharyngeal cancer prevalence

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(HealthDay)—There is geographic variation in the proportion of head

and neck cancers attributable to human papillomavirus (HPV), according to a study published online Jan. 8 in *Head & Neck*.

Hisham Mehanna, Ph.D., from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom, and colleagues tested formalin-fixed paraffin embedded diagnostic biopsies for p16 immunohistochemistry and HPV-DNA using validated protocols on samples from 801 patients with [head](#) and neck cancer. Participants were recruited prospectively between 2006 and 2011 in four randomized controlled trials.

The researchers found that 21 percent of patients were positive for both HPV-DNA and p16, detected primarily in oropharyngeal cancer (55 percent). HPV positivity was found in only 1 percent of patients with non-oropharyngeal cancer. There were differences in the prevalence of HPV-positive oropharyngeal cancer between Western Europe and Eastern Europe and Asia (37 versus 6 and 2 percent, respectively; both P

"This is the first study to establish geographic variability as an independent risk factor in HPV-positive oropharyngeal cancer prevalence, with higher prevalence in Western Europe," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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