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Materials/methods: A total of 30 patients were randomised: 20 received SAMITAL® (granules for suspension), 4 times/day, until the end of the CT/RT therapy and 10 patients received placebo. Maximum period of treatment was 7 weeks (50 days).

Results: After SAMITAL® treatment, patients showed statistical reduction and improvement in all parameters of the disease ($p<0.0001$). Mucositis grade improved (33%), together with pain intensity (55%), irritation (31%) and inflammation in throat and oral cavity. Furthermore, the ability to swallow solid food and liquids has been observed only after SAMITAL® therapy.

The side effects in SAMITAL® group were nausea and vomiting in15% patients, but all were able to complete the entire treatment cycle. After placebo treatment, no effects were observed and 50% patients complained of nausea and diarrhoea. Furthermore, they all withdrew after 2 weeks. Moreover, none of them completed the 7-week treatment.

Conclusions: This placebo-controlled trial showed that SAMITAL® is generally effective and safe (Grade ≤1 toxicity) in the treatment of oral mucositis induced by chemo radiotherapy.

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GENDER AS A PREDICTOR OF BURDEN IN CAREGIVERS OF PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED CANCER

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Patients & methods: Research evidence about gender differences in caregiving burden indicates that female caregivers are more likely to report greater burden than male. The aim of this study was to assess whether

1) patients' gender influences the perception of caregivers' burden

2) gender determines differences between male and female caregivers of advanced cancer patients in terms of perception of burden and psychological distress.

The sample consisted of 100 Greek patients undergoing palliative radiotherapy and their primary caregivers (PCs). They both provided their demographics while PCs completed Oberst Caregiving Burden Scale (OCBS), Bakas Caregiving Outcomes Scale (BCOS) and Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HAD).

Results: The majority of patients were male (63%) with a mean age 63.9 years and of PCs (76%) were female with a mean age 52.9 years. Statistical analysis revealed that male patients caused more total score of caregivers' burden in BCOS ($p=0,001$), more anxiety ($p<,0005$) and more depression ($p=0,001$). Female PCs scored higher in OCBS-D ($p=0,045$), meaning that perceived caregiving tasks more burdensome than male. Moreover, female reported less total score in BCOS

($p<, 0005$), implying that every day life has got worst. Finally, female PCs scored higher in HAD, meaning that they reported higher depression ($p<, 0005$) and higher anxiety ($p=0,001$) than male PCs.

Conclusions: Despite study limitations, the results of this first Greek study assessing gender differences in caregiving burden highlight that caring process can be more demanding for female, and the importance of developing special intervention programs for them.

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OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF SPEECH QUALITY OF PATIENTS TREATED FOR HEAD AND NECK CANCER

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Objectives: In clinical practice, speech quality is mainly described subjectively by speech therapists or by patients reported outcomes. These techniques for describing the perceptual quality of speech of head and neck cancer patients are not powerful and accurate enough to allow wide sharing of data and information between groups of therapists and surgeons working in different hospitals. The purpose of this study is to investigate the validity of objective analysis of speech by an Artificial Neural Network.

Methods: Speech recordings of 51 head and neck cancer patients 6 months after treatment and of 18 control speakers were subjectively evaluated by trained listeners regarding intelligibility, nasal resonance and articulation. The EORTC QLQ-H&N35 speech scale was used as patient reported outcome. Objective analysis of the speech features nasalance and voicing was performed by an Artificial Neural Network: ANN-nasalance and ANN-voicing.

Results: ANN-nasalance differentiated patients from controls and correlated significantly with intelligibility, articulation and nasal resonance. ANN-voicing also differentiated patients from controls and correlated