Snapshot

Oral health: an important consideration in patient care

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Severe radiation caries, which caused major psychological distress to the patient, occurred in a 57-year-old man after treatment for recurrent squamous cell carcinoma in the base of the tongue. Despite a post-radiation caries prevention program, surgical and radiation complications caused an inability to maintain effective oral hygiene, resulting in the progression of radiation caries (Figure). One month after the photograph in the Figure was taken, the patient underwent total hip replacement surgery. During subsequent post-operative appointments, the patient received antibiotic prophylaxis but dental rehabilitation was delayed by 3 months to avoid potential early infection of the implant. This serves as a reminder to medical practitioners to encourage patients to seek regular dental care and consider a dental assessment before major surgery. ■

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