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I. SUMMARY

The prevalence of oral cancer is high in Sri Lanka. Usually they are preceded by a precancerous lesion or condition. Leukoplakia is the commonest precancerous lesion found in this part of the world. Many possible aetiological factors and relevant habits for the development of oral cancer and precancer are found among estate workers in Sri Lanka. The present study was limited to age group of 45-60 years the risk group of population.

The study was done in ten randomly selected estates belonging to Avissawella Janatha Estate Development Board (J.E.D.B.) All the subjects of 45-60 years of age was screened for leukoplakia and the relevant habits were recorded. In addition to leukoplakia other premalignant lesions and conditions were recorded.

The total of thousand and fifty eight subjects were examined consisted 496 males and 562 females. Number of subjects detected with leukoplakia was 71. The prevalence of leukoplakia was 6.7%. The leukoplakia lesions were equally distributed among males and females (males 6.8% and females 6.5%). The highest percentage of leukoplakia had occurred in males of age group of 54-60 years. All the detected commissural leukoplakia were found in males. ~~But of total detected commissural~~

~~leukoplakia were found in males.~~ Out of total detected buccal mucosal leukoplakia 61% of them were in females.

The betel chewing habit was practiced by 98% of the study population. Betel chewers who had chewed betel with all four ingredients (betel leaf, arecanut, tobacco and lime) had 81 leukoplakia lesion out of total detected 82 leukoplakia lesions.

It has been observed the percentage of leukoplakia lesions were high among frequent chewers. those who chewed more than 15 quid a day had the highest percentage of leukoplakia.

Subjects who had practiced the betel chewing habit for over 30 years had significantly higher percentage of leukoplakia lesions. Beedi and cigar smoking were popular among the study population. Beedi and cigar smokers had 71% of total detected commissural leukoplakia lesions.

Kasippu was consumed by 80% ^{alcohol consumers of the} of study population. Arrack drinkers had the highest percentage of leukoplakia.

Those who indulged in all three habits had the highest percentage of leukoplakia.

Leukoplakia lesions were detected in subject who had chewed betel only, but no leukoplakia lesion had detect in alcohol or smoking alone habit groups.