



Oral Pathology: Time to Ponder Again

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Oral pathology is an important branch of medicine which represents the confluence of basic sciences and clinical practice. It is traditionally referred to as the branch which deals with all the pathologies occurring in the head and neck region along with oral manifestations of various systemic conditions.

Oral pathologists are recognized as academicians and had excellent career choices a decade ago with the inception of many new government and private dental colleges. However, since the last few years, this branch has seen a tremendous increase in a number of oral pathologists leading to scarcity in job opportunities. Further, this scenario makes a future postgraduate aspirant hesitant to select this branch as his/her specialty. So the responsibility lies on the shoulders of senior faculties and current researchers in this field to uphold the dignity of this branch.

We hereby want to put forward a few suggestions to deal with the situation.

Oral pathologist can be recruited as academic faculty in medical colleges, under general pathology department

to teach basic pathology to undergraduate dental students (cell, injury, inflammation repair, etc.).

They can also teach undergraduate medical students the part of pathology related to the orofacial region. A step taken in this direction will indirectly benefit both the branches.

Oral pathologists can also be helpful in the diagnosis and maintenance of cancer registries especially dealing with oral cancer and oral potentially malignant disorders under the pathology department of medical colleges and hospitals.

Also, they can be a part of various tobacco eradication/de-addiction programs started by the government at various levels. Oral pathologists are well versed with oral signs and symptoms of tobacco use and thus, can help the patient in tobacco cessation at the earliest.

As this is a burning topic in our specialty, we all should make an effort to discuss and come out with some solutions to rejuvenate the branch of oral pathology. The above suggestions, if appropriate, can be discussed among the seniors and at different platforms such as national and international conferences.

As it is rightly said the path is difficult, but a small step can make a difference. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step!!

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