PRESENTATION 3

The Use of Honey in the Prevention and Treatment of Radiation/Chemotherapy-Induced Oral Mucositis in Paediatric Patients

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Background

Conventional treatment of oral mucositis has been proven to be ineffective and poorly tolerated by paediatric patients, of whom 80% suffer from this debilitating side effect of cancer treatment. Honey has long been known for its antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and wound-healing properties. No review of the evidence for its specific use in paediatric patients has been undertaken, rendering its potential as a gold-standard treatment in children unconfirmed.

Methods

Following PRISMA guidelines, four major electronic databases were screened for empirical studies, published from 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2019 in the English language. Any studies featuring only participants outside of an age range of 0-18 years were excluded and the quality of included studies was assessed using Cochrane's Risk of Bias tool and the Jadad scale. The main investigated outcomes were the impact of honey on mucositis prevention, severity reduction and length of time spent in hospital.

Results

A total of 52 publications were screened from the databases, of which six were included. Three studies were RCTs, with the other three being a quasi-experimental study, observational blind study and open labelled controlled study. The results showed that honey was effective at preventing the development of oral mucositis, reducing the severity of the grade of mucositis and reducing hospitalisation time post-development.

Key messages

The findings showed that honey is effective in the treatment of oral mucositis in paediatric patients over the age of one year. Due to its sweet nature, ease of availability and cost-effective production, honey would be an easy candidate for widespread implementation to enable patients to benefit from this natural remedy.

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