

Head and neck cancer (HNC)



HNC is a heterogeneous group of tumors arising from the oral cavity, oropharynx, hypopharynx, larynx, and nasopharynx. It is the 6th most common cancer worldwide. The majority of carcinomas are squamous and are due to tobacco and alcohol consumption, which are two factors traditionally implicated in the development of HNC. In recent decades, a large and constantly increasing proportion of oropharyngeal cancers have been attributed to Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HNC is curable in more than 90% of cases in early stages. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, HNC is diagnosed at a locally advanced stage and almost half of patients die from the disease. Early diagnosis is of paramount importance for a better disease outcome.

In early stages, either surgery (for cancers of the oral cavity and larynx/hypopharynx) or a combination of chemotherapy and radiotherapy (for cancers of the larynx and nasopharynx) consist the cornerstone of treatment. For recurrent or metastatic disease, immunotherapy as monotherapy, chemotherapy in combination with immunotherapy or the monoclonal antibody against EGFR cetuximab are established treatments depending on the expression of PD-L1, which is a biomarker routinely detected using immunohistochemistry (IHC) on tumor and immune cells. Our department provides comprehensive care, as well as innovative and therapeutic approaches to patients with HNC. Our team dominates at the Greek and international level in clinical trials and new cancer treatments. Our interdisciplinary approach to the disease individualizes the treatment of each patient by balancing the effectiveness of treatment with quality of life. Our multidisciplinary team includes head and neck cancer surgeons (ENT, maxillofacial surgeons), radiation oncologists, pathologists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, nutritionists, smoking cessation specialists, dentists, lymphedema physiotherapists, specialist nurses and social workers. The functional outcome is an important factor in deciding which therapeutic approach is appropriate for each patient.