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# Head and Neck Cancer: Promoting Patient Independence

- ✓ **Head and Neck Cancer** defines collectively a group of cancers arising in: oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, paranasal sinuses and nasal cavity, salivary glands
- ✓ **11449 new cases** of head and neck cancer have been diagnosed in 2014, accounting for **3% of all the new cancer cases** for the same year
- ✓ Head and neck cancer **incidence rates increased by 30% since the early 1990s**, and are **projected to rise by 33%** between 2014 and 2035
- ✓ Depending from site, stage, size and comorbidities, **head and neck cancers are treated with either surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, targeted therapies**, alone or in combination
- ✓ **The treatment is challenged by the potential functional impact** through disruption of vital anatomy and cosmesis
- ✓ One year net **survival among head and neck cancer subtypes is higher in salivary glands cancer, and lowest in hypopharyngeal cancer**. 54.7 % of patients affected by larynx cancer (the most frequent subtype), survive 10 years after diagnosis.

## Project stages

- A retrospective examination of patients case records for head and neck cancer patients admitted on Ribblesdale Ward from August 2016 to August 2017
- A critical review of the relevant literature
- Focusing on the most relevant care needs as identified from the case records examination and the literature review
- Developing and implementing a care intervention which could enhance patient independence, adaptation and self management of care needs
- A preliminary evaluation of the outcomes of the intervention



## Background

- Head and neck cancer: **a complex area of care**
- A questionnaire taken by nursing staff on Ribblesdale, the Royal Preston Hospital inpatient oncology ward, identified that **this patient group carries a burden of symptoms and distress which are often poorly recognised and treated**
- From clinical experience, it is apparent that **early and sustained head and neck cancer patient education could facilitate patient empowerment and self-management of health needs**, and potentially reduce admissions and length of stay

## Preliminary findings

- ✓ So far, the **most prominent adaptive problems** emerging from our case notes review **are in the area of nutrition and hydration**, and present as a variety of issues including **swallowing problems, oral mucositis, dental issues, kidney injury, inability to use the feeding pumps and devices and odynophagia**.
- ✓ These preliminary findings will **inform the next stages of the project**