



Don't ignore the signs

With cases of tongue cancer in younger patients on the rise, the importance of early diagnosis is greater than ever



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In recent years, there has been a concerning rise in the incidence of tongue cancer among younger populations. The results, published in *Oral Oncology*, show a significant increase in cases of tongue cancer in people under 45, particularly in women, where the incidence has risen by a staggering 385% over 32 years.

This alarming trend highlights significant patient safety concerns, especially related to the delayed diagnosis of tongue cancer in patients who do not present traditional risk factors, such as being older and male and having a history of smoking and high alcohol consumption.

Young Tongues is a charity at the forefront of addressing this issue – it is dedicated to providing support services to young patients with tongue cancer worldwide. Founded by young survivors of tongue cancer, it offers a platform for patients to share experiences, raise awareness and advocate for better diagnostic practices. Through the peer-to-peer support network, members have identified common issues and patterns that contribute to the

delayed diagnosis of tongue cancer in younger patients.

A call to action

A primary concern raised by the community is the lack of awareness among both dentists and GPs of the rising incidence of tongue cancer in younger demographics. Many young adults report that their symptoms were initially dismissed or misdiagnosed by healthcare providers who did not consider

“I was told there was no way my white patch could turn into cancer”