



Improving early detection of oral squamous cell carcinoma with advanced salivary diagnostics may impact mortality

By [Jack Martin, MD](#)

Oral cancer is the sixth most prevalent form of cancer in the United States. According to the Oral Cancer Foundation and the National Cancer Institute, approximately 43,000 people in the U.S. will be newly diagnosed with oral cancer in 2014. This includes those cancers that occur in the mouth itself, in the very back of the mouth, known as the oropharynx, and on the exterior lip of the mouth.

Oral cancer is also curable if detected early enough.

The [PeriRx salivary biomarker test](#) for oral cancer is scheduled to launch in the late spring/early summer and will provide dental professionals with the most clinically validated test available to assist in the early detection of oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC). The test is painless, takes seconds to administer, and is easy to incorporate into the workflow of any practice.

The availability of this test to aid in the decision on the management of oral lesions and abnormalities should increase the frequency of thorough oral cancer exams by dental professionals, particularly on patients with certain risk profiles such as tobacco use, alcohol consumption, and multiple sex partners.

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The increased volume of oral cancer exams will improve the early detection that is needed to help lower the annual mortality rates of OSCC. At the same time, the salivary test will help to limit the number of negative biopsies.

The exam is administered chairside by having the patient rinse and then spit into a funnel-equipped collection tube. The funnel is removed, the tube is capped, and the sample sent to a state-of-the-art lab using provided shipping materials.

Within two days, if the lab report comes back positive, the patient should be referred to an oral surgeon for consideration of a biopsy. If the test comes back negative, but there are still visible lesions or abnormalities, the dentist can employ a watchful waiting approach and reevaluate the patient in several weeks to see if there has been resolution. The important takeaway for the dental team that should also be explained to patients is that this test improves the accuracy of a visual oral cancer exam — whereas the clinician may visually identify an area of concern, the PeriRx salivary test for OSCC will help quantify the degree of concern that is warranted.



Jack Martin, MD, is a practicing physician and the chief medical officer of [PeriRx LLC](#), a premier developer of breakthrough, noninvasive, oral diagnostic technology that will help clinical professionals detect and treat diseases sooner and enhance the practice of wellness management. He may be contacted at MartinJ@MLHS.org.