

STAY HEAD & NECK CANCER AWARE

don't delay, seek medical advice today



#StayHNCAware

The [European Head and Neck Society \(EHNS\)](#) through its [Make Sense](#) campaign and the [European Cancer Patient Coalition \(ECPC\)](#) have conducted a YouGov survey of over 5,700 people across 5 countries (Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Turkey), investigating public awareness of head and neck cancer.

The survey reveals that the general public are both unaware of symptoms and reluctant to seek medical advice; coupled with COVID-19 the results suggest we are facing a ticking time bomb for late diagnosis of this deadly disease.



WHAT IS HEAD & NECK CANCER?

Head and neck cancer is any cancer that is found in the head or neck region, including the inside of the mouth and tongue, the throat and the voice box.

It is the sixth most common type of cancer in Europe, with around 160,000 people diagnosed each year. Yet:

73% of respondents admitted they do not confidently know the disease's symptoms and

38% have not heard of head and neck cancer.



IDENTIFYING SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Choosing from a list, respondents varied in their ability to correctly identify different symptoms of head and neck cancer:

58%

A lump in the neck

38%

Pain when swallowing

26%

Frequent nose bleeds

21%

White or red patches in mouth

12%

Persistent blocked nose

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Nearly 30% of respondents were less likely to book an appointment with a healthcare professional due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



SEEKING MEDICAL ADVICE

On average only 45% of respondents would visit a healthcare professional should they experience one of the symptoms for 3 weeks or longer – despite this being the course of action endorsed by medical experts.

People were least likely to seek medical advice for hoarseness (**36%**) and unpleasant taste in mouth (**26%**).

RISK FACTORS



GREATER EDUCATION STILL NEEDED AROUND ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Only **57%** and **31%** of respondents identified smoking and drinking alcohol, respectively, as risk factors, despite being the leading causes of head and neck cancer.



INCREASING INCIDENCE OF HPV-RELATED HEAD AND NECK CANCER

Yet only **1 in 5** identified HPV – a viral infection passed on through skin to skin contact – as a risk factor.



UNDERSTANDING THE RISK FOR MEN AGED 40+

1 in 4 knew that being aged 40+ puts you at higher risk.
Only 5% of respondents recognised gender as a factor.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 5,725 Polish, Turkish, German, Italian and Portuguese adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16 – 23 June 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Polish, Turkish, German, Italian and Portuguese adults (aged 18+).



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