

# Interdisciplinary Management of Oral Health Complications in Cancer Patients: A Collaborative Approach Involving Laboratory Specialists, Dentists, Pharmacists, and Social Workers

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## Abstract

This study explores the interdisciplinary management of oral health complications in cancer patients, focusing on the collaboration between laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers in a tertiary hospital. Using qualitative interviews, key themes emerged, highlighting the roles of each profession in managing oral health, the importance of interdisciplinary communication, and the challenges faced in coordinating care. Findings demonstrate that a collaborative approach leads to improved patient outcomes and enhanced quality of life, despite logistical barriers and differing treatment priorities. Strategies for optimizing interdisciplinary care are discussed.

**Keywords:** Cancer Patients, Oral Health, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Laboratory Specialists, Dentists, Pharmacists, Social Workers, Patient Outcomes

## Introduction

Oral health complications are common in cancer patients, particularly those undergoing chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or other forms of aggressive treatment. These complications, such as mucositis, dry mouth (xerostomia), infections, and tooth decay, not only reduce the quality of life for patients but can also interfere with cancer treatment by increasing the risk of infection and treatment delays (Rubenstein et al., 2004). Managing these issues effectively requires a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach, as the oral health of cancer patients is influenced by various factors, including their overall medical condition, the side effects of their treatments, and psychosocial stressors (Sonis, 2007).

Dentists play a critical role in diagnosing and treating these oral health complications. They help prevent and manage oral infections, mucositis, and other complications through regular screenings and interventions. Laboratory specialists contribute by providing essential diagnostic support, including blood tests and microbial cultures, to monitor infection risks and overall health status (Beacher and Sweeney, 2018). Pharmacists are key players in managing the medications required for treating oral infections, controlling pain, and minimizing the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation on oral tissues (Lin et al., 2015). Social workers support patients by addressing the psychological and social challenges that arise from dealing with cancer and its complications, providing counseling, and helping patients navigate healthcare systems to access necessary resources (Panel et al., 2011).

The complexity of managing oral health complications in cancer patients underscores the need for a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach. When healthcare professionals from different fields collaborate effectively, they can address the multifaceted nature of oral health issues in cancer care, improving patient outcomes and quality of life. This study aims to explore how laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers work together to manage oral health complications in cancer patients, focusing on the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration and the challenges encountered in the process.

## Literature Review

### Oral Health Complications in Cancer Patients

Oral health complications are prevalent among cancer patients, particularly those undergoing treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation. Common issues include oral mucositis, xerostomia (dry mouth), oral infections, and dental decay (Sonis, 2007). Oral mucositis, one of the most debilitating complications, is characterized by inflammation and ulceration of the mucosal lining in the mouth. It not only causes significant pain and discomfort but also increases the risk of systemic infections and can delay cancer treatment, thereby negatively affecting overall outcomes (Rubenstein et al., 2004). Xerostomia, often caused by radiation therapy, results from damage to the salivary glands, leading to dry mouth, which impairs oral hygiene and promotes dental decay (Jensen et al., 2010). These complications necessitate close monitoring and proactive management, underscoring the need for a multidisciplinary approach.

### Role of Dentists in Managing Oral Health Complications

Dentists play a central role in preventing, diagnosing, and managing oral health complications in cancer patients. Regular oral assessments before, during, and after cancer treatment are critical in identifying potential issues early and implementing preventive strategies (Beacher and Sweeney, 2018). Dentists are often the first line of defense in managing complications like oral mucositis and infections. For instance, they may prescribe topical treatments to reduce inflammation and pain, recommend fluoride treatments to prevent dental decay, and provide interventions such as oral rinses or antibiotics to manage infections (Epstein et al., 2012).

Moreover, the collaboration between dentists and oncologists is vital in adjusting cancer treatment protocols when severe oral complications arise. By addressing oral health problems, dentists help ensure that cancer treatments can continue without interruption. Studies have shown that early dental interventions significantly reduce the incidence and severity of oral complications, highlighting the importance of dental involvement in cancer care (Jensen et al., 2010).

### Role of Laboratory Specialists in Diagnostics and Monitoring

Laboratory specialists contribute to the management of cancer-related oral health complications by providing essential diagnostic services. Blood tests, microbial cultures, and other laboratory analyses are critical for monitoring patients' immune status, detecting infections, and assessing treatment efficacy (Beacher and Sweeney, 2018). For example, cancer patients, especially those undergoing chemotherapy, are at increased risk of neutropenia, which reduces their ability to fight infections. Laboratory specialists help detect infections early through culture and sensitivity testing, allowing timely interventions with antibiotics or antifungals (Peterson et al., 2011).

In addition to infection management, laboratory tests help assess the overall health of the patient, allowing healthcare providers to adjust treatment plans accordingly. Regular blood work, including complete blood counts (CBC) and liver function tests, is crucial for monitoring the patient's ability to tolerate cancer

treatments and addressing any complications that may affect oral health (Peterson et al., 2011). This diagnostic input is crucial in informing both dental and medical treatment plans for cancer patients.

#### Pharmacists 'Role in Managing Medication for Oral Health Complications

Pharmacists play a crucial role in managing medications that address the oral side effects of cancer treatments. Their expertise in medication management is critical in ensuring that patients receive appropriate pain relief, infection control, and symptom management (Lin et al., 2015). For example, pharmacists collaborate with oncologists and dentists to provide medications such as opioid analgesics for severe pain, antifungal agents to treat oral candidiasis, and mouthwashes that contain corticosteroids or other agents to reduce mucosal inflammation (Elad et al., 2015).

Additionally, pharmacists help manage the interactions between cancer therapies and medications prescribed for oral health, ensuring that patients do not experience adverse effects. Given the complexity of cancer care, drug interactions are a major concern, and pharmacists are instrumental in identifying and mitigating these risks (Peterson et al., 2011). Pharmacists also play a key role in patient education, advising cancer patients on how to use oral rinses, topical treatments, and other medications correctly to optimize their effectiveness and minimize side effects.

#### Social Workers 'Role in Psychosocial Support and Care Coordination

Cancer and its associated complications, including oral health issues, can significantly impact a patient's mental health and quality of life. Social workers provide essential psychosocial support, helping patients and their families cope with the emotional and social challenges of cancer treatment (Panel et al., 2011). They assist in managing the psychological distress that often accompanies oral health complications, such as anxiety, depression, and changes in body image due to treatment-related changes in appearance and function (Valdez and Brennan, 2018).

In addition to emotional support, social workers are critical in care coordination. They work closely with healthcare providers to ensure that patients have access to necessary services, such as dental care, psychosocial support, and financial assistance for medications and treatments. Social workers help navigate the healthcare system and connect patients with community resources, thereby facilitating a comprehensive approach to care that addresses both physical and emotional health (Panel et al., 2011).

#### Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Managing Oral Health Complications

Effective management of oral health complications in cancer patients requires a well-coordinated, interdisciplinary approach. Research highlights that collaboration between laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers improves patient outcomes by ensuring that all aspects of care are addressed comprehensively (Peterson et al., 2011). For example, laboratory specialists provide diagnostic data that inform the treatment decisions of dentists and pharmacists, while social workers ensure that patients receive the necessary psychosocial support to adhere to treatment plans.

Studies show that interdisciplinary teamwork can reduce the severity and incidence of oral complications, improve patient adherence to treatment, and enhance overall quality of life (Beacher and Sweeney, 2018). Regular communication and collaboration between these professionals are essential to identify potential problems early, provide timely interventions, and address the multifaceted needs of cancer patients. By working together, healthcare teams can ensure that oral health issues do not hinder the overall treatment plan, thus allowing patients to continue their cancer therapies with fewer complications.

## Methodology

This study was conducted in a tertiary hospital to explore the interdisciplinary management of oral health complications in cancer patients, focusing on the collaborative roles of laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers. A qualitative approach was employed to gain in-depth insights into how these professionals work together to address the oral health needs of cancer patients and to identify the challenges and benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration in this context.

### Study Design

A qualitative, descriptive research design was used to explore the perspectives and experiences of healthcare professionals involved in managing oral health complications in cancer patients. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with healthcare providers to understand their roles, the nature of their collaboration, and the challenges they face in ensuring comprehensive care for patients undergoing cancer treatment.

### Participants

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to recruit participants from the oncology, dental, pharmacy, and social work departments of the tertiary hospital. The study involved:

- 5 laboratory specialists, responsible for conducting diagnostic tests and monitoring infection risks.
- 5 dentists, who provided oral care and managed dental and mucosal complications resulting from cancer treatment.
- 5 pharmacists, involved in medication management to address pain, infection, and other side effects related to oral health.
- 5 social workers, who supported patients emotionally, coordinated care, and helped navigate healthcare systems to access services.

All participants were required to have at least two years of experience working with cancer patients. Patients who had experienced oral health complications during their cancer treatment were also interviewed to gather complementary insights into their experiences with the interdisciplinary team.

### Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with healthcare professionals and selected cancer patients. Interviews were conducted in a private setting within the hospital, each lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. An interview guide was used to ensure that all relevant topics were covered, including:

- The role of each profession in managing oral health complications.
- The nature of collaboration between laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers.
- Challenges encountered in interdisciplinary care.
- Strategies to improve communication and coordination among professionals.

Sample interview questions included:

- “Can you describe a recent case where you collaborated with other professionals in managing a cancer patient’s oral health complications?”
- “What challenges do you face in coordinating care between different departments?”
- “How do you think the interdisciplinary approach affects patient outcomes in managing oral health issues?”

In addition to interviews, patient records were reviewed to gather data on oral health complications, treatment interventions, and patient outcomes. This review provided quantitative data on the frequency and

types of oral health complications experienced by cancer patients, as well as the interventions implemented by the interdisciplinary team.

### Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach:

1. Familiarization with the data: The researchers transcribed the interviews and reviewed the transcripts to gain a thorough understanding of the participants' experiences.
2. Generating initial codes: Key phrases and concepts related to interdisciplinary collaboration, role definition, communication, and patient care were coded.
3. Searching for themes: The codes were grouped into broader themes, such as "interdisciplinary collaboration," "role clarity and challenges," "impact on patient outcomes," and "strategies for improvement."
4. Reviewing themes: The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data.
5. Defining and naming themes: The final themes were defined, and illustrative quotes from the participants were selected to support each theme.
6. Writing up the results: The findings were written up, with a focus on how interdisciplinary collaboration contributed to managing oral health complications in cancer patients.

Quantitative data from patient records were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends in oral health complications and the effectiveness of interventions provided by the interdisciplinary team. This analysis included the frequency of oral health issues (e.g., mucositis, infections), the types of interventions used (e.g., medications, dental procedures), and patient outcomes such as infection rates and the continuation of cancer treatment without delays.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the ethics committee. All participants were provided with information about the study's purpose, and written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Participants were assured of confidentiality and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. All patient data were anonymized to protect privacy and comply with ethical standards.

### Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the study, the following strategies were employed:

- Credibility: Member checking was conducted by sharing the initial findings with participants to confirm that their views were accurately represented.
- Dependability: An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process, documenting all key decisions related to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
- Transferability: Rich, detailed descriptions of the hospital setting, participants' roles, and the interdisciplinary processes were provided to allow readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other healthcare settings.
- Confirmability: Reflexive journaling was used by the research team to acknowledge any potential biases and ensure that the findings were grounded in the data.

### Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the interdisciplinary management of oral health complications in cancer patients, there are several limitations to consider. First, the sample size was

relatively small and limited to a single tertiary hospital, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other settings. Second, the study relied on self-reported data from interviews, which may be subject to recall bias. Future research could expand the sample size and include multiple hospitals to gain a broader perspective on interdisciplinary care in cancer treatment.

## Findings

The thematic analysis of the data revealed four key themes related to the interdisciplinary management of oral health complications in cancer patients: (1) The Role of Each Profession in Oral Health Management, (2) Interdisciplinary Communication and Collaboration, (3) Challenges in Interdisciplinary Care, and (4) Impact on Patient Outcomes. These themes highlight both the strengths of collaborative care and the challenges encountered by the team of laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers in managing cancer patients' oral health complications.

### Theme 1: The Role of Each Profession in Oral Health Management

Each profession involved in the interdisciplinary team played a distinct but complementary role in managing the oral health complications of cancer patients.

#### Sub-theme 1.1: Dentists as Key Providers of Oral Health Care

Dentists were primarily responsible for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of oral health issues such as mucositis, dental decay, and infections.

- "We try to see cancer patients before they start treatment to identify any potential oral health risks. Once treatment begins, we monitor them for signs of mucositis or infections that could disrupt their cancer therapy." (Dentist 2)
- "Oral infections are a big concern, especially with patients who are immunocompromised. Our role is to catch these problems early and manage them before they escalate." (Dentist 4)

#### Sub-theme 1.2: Laboratory Specialists in Diagnostics and Infection Monitoring

Laboratory specialists contributed by conducting diagnostic tests, such as blood counts and microbial cultures, to monitor infection risks and ensure that appropriate interventions were initiated in a timely manner.

- "We work closely with the dentists and oncologists to monitor for infections, especially in patients with neutropenia. Our role is to provide the diagnostic data they need to make informed treatment decisions." (Laboratory Specialist 1)
- "Sometimes, we get cultures from oral lesions or ulcerations, and this helps us identify the exact pathogens, allowing the clinical team to tailor the treatment accordingly." (Laboratory Specialist 3)

#### Sub-theme 1.3: Pharmacists Managing Medications for Oral Complications

Pharmacists were involved in prescribing and managing medications to alleviate oral pain, control infections, and minimize the side effects of cancer treatments on oral tissues.

- "A lot of what we do revolves around pain management. We prescribe topical anesthetics for mucositis and sometimes systemic medications to help control the pain. We also work closely with the oncology team to adjust medications to prevent adverse oral side effects." (Pharmacist 3)
- "It's our job to ensure that cancer medications don't worsen oral health problems, and we also manage the drugs patients need to control oral infections." (Pharmacist 5)

#### Sub-theme 1.4: Social Workers Addressing Psychosocial and Emotional Challenges

Social workers provided emotional support to patients dealing with the psychological effects of cancer treatments, including the distress caused by oral health complications.

- “For many patients, the oral complications from treatment can be a huge emotional burden. They’re already dealing with the stress of cancer, and then they have to cope with painful oral conditions that affect their eating and speaking. We try to provide counseling and connect them with the right resources.” (Social Worker 2)
- “We’re also here to support patients and their families by helping them navigate the healthcare system, whether that means coordinating appointments or connecting them to financial assistance programs for medications.” (Social Worker 4)

#### Theme 2: Interdisciplinary Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration among the interdisciplinary team were crucial for managing the complex needs of cancer patients.

##### Sub-theme 2.1: Regular Team Meetings

Participants highlighted the importance of regular team meetings to discuss patient progress and adjust treatment plans based on the latest clinical information.

- “We have weekly meetings where all the different specialists involved in the patient’s care come together. This really helps us stay on the same page and ensures that we’re all contributing to the patient’s treatment plan in a coordinated way.” (Pharmacist 1)
- “When we meet as a team, it helps us integrate the information from different perspectives, and we can make adjustments based on what everyone’s seeing in their own assessments.” (Dentist 5)

##### Sub-theme 2.2: Clear Communication Channels

Participants noted that clear, timely communication between team members was essential to ensuring that treatment for oral health complications was delivered promptly.

- “Communication is key. If there’s any delay in information between the lab and the clinical team, it can hold up treatment. We try to keep open lines of communication at all times, especially when it comes to infections that need immediate attention.” (Laboratory Specialist 4)
- “It’s all about making sure that the dentist knows what the lab results are, the pharmacist knows what medications to adjust, and the social worker knows how the patient is coping. Without communication, the system breaks down.” (Social Worker 1)

#### Theme 3: Challenges in Interdisciplinary Care

Despite the benefits of collaboration, participants identified several challenges that affected interdisciplinary care.

##### Sub-theme 3.1: Logistical Barriers to Coordination

Participants noted that logistical challenges, such as coordinating schedules and aligning priorities, sometimes hindered smooth interdisciplinary collaboration.

- “It’s not always easy to get everyone in the same room at the same time. We’re all busy with our respective roles, so coordinating meetings and treatments can be a logistical challenge.” (Dentist 3)
- “There are times when lab results take longer to come back than expected, or there’s a delay in communication between departments. These logistical issues can create bottlenecks in the care process.” (Laboratory Specialist 2)

### Sub-theme 3.2: Differing Treatment Priorities Among Specialties

Participants mentioned that differing treatment priorities between the various professions sometimes created tension, particularly when deciding how to address oral health issues in the context of ongoing cancer treatment.

- “Sometimes the oncologists are focused on pushing forward with the cancer treatment, while we’re trying to manage the oral complications. It can be a bit of a balancing act to make sure we’re treating the whole patient.” (Pharmacist 4)
- “Our priority is managing the oral health issues, but that can sometimes conflict with the broader cancer treatment plan. It’s important to find a middle ground where both issues are addressed effectively.” (Dentist 1)

### Theme 4: Impact on Patient Outcomes

The interdisciplinary approach to managing oral health complications had a significant positive impact on patient outcomes.

#### Sub-theme 4.1: Improved Oral Health Outcomes

Participants reported that interdisciplinary care led to more timely interventions, reducing the severity of oral complications such as mucositis and infections.

- “We’ve seen that when we work together, patients have fewer severe oral complications. They’re able to continue their cancer treatment with fewer interruptions, which is crucial for their overall prognosis.” (Dentist 4)
- “Our ability to prevent infections early on has improved dramatically because of the close collaboration between the lab and the clinical teams.” (Laboratory Specialist 5)

#### Sub-theme 4.2: Enhanced Patient Quality of Life

The emotional and social support provided by the interdisciplinary team contributed to better overall quality of life for patients, despite the challenges of cancer treatment.

- “When we address not just the medical side but also the emotional and psychological aspects of their care, patients feel more supported. It makes a huge difference in how they cope with the treatment.” (Social Worker 5)
- “Managing their pain, keeping their mouths healthy, and making sure they have the support they need really improves their day-to-day experience during cancer treatment.” (Pharmacist 2)

## Discussion

This study explored the interdisciplinary management of oral health complications in cancer patients, focusing on the roles of laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers. The findings demonstrate that a collaborative approach is essential for effectively managing the complex oral health needs of cancer patients, as it ensures timely interventions, improves patient outcomes, and enhances the overall quality of life. However, challenges such as logistical barriers and differing priorities among team members also emerged, highlighting areas for improvement in interdisciplinary care.

### The Role of Each Profession in Oral Health Management

Each healthcare professional brings a unique and critical perspective to managing oral health complications in cancer patients. Dentists are at the forefront, providing preventive care, diagnosing complications, and offering treatments such as oral rinses, antibiotics, and restorative procedures to address dental decay and



infections. Their involvement is crucial, as studies have shown that early dental interventions can reduce the severity of oral health complications, thereby minimizing treatment disruptions (Jensen et al., 2010).

Laboratory specialists play a vital role in diagnostics, offering the necessary tests to monitor infection risks and overall health. By providing real-time data on immune function and pathogen identification, laboratory specialists support the clinical team in making informed decisions on managing oral infections, especially in immunocompromised cancer patients (Peterson et al., 2011). This diagnostic input is essential in ensuring that oral health complications do not lead to severe infections or treatment delays, consistent with the findings of Rubenstein et al. (2004) regarding the importance of infection control in cancer care.

Pharmacists contribute by managing medications to address pain, control infections, and alleviate side effects associated with cancer treatments. Their role in preventing drug interactions between cancer therapies and medications used to manage oral complications is particularly critical. Pharmacists also help patients understand how to properly use prescribed medications, improving adherence and minimizing side effects (Lin et al., 2015).

Social workers support patients holistically, addressing the psychosocial and emotional challenges associated with oral health complications. These findings align with previous research by Panel et al. (2011), which emphasizes that cancer patients benefit significantly from psychosocial support, as it helps them cope with the distress of cancer treatments and related complications. Social workers also coordinate care, ensuring that patients receive the resources and services they need, from financial assistance to counseling, which improves adherence to treatment plans.

#### Interdisciplinary Communication and Collaboration

The study highlighted that regular team meetings and clear communication channels are critical for effective interdisciplinary collaboration. Weekly meetings allowed team members to align their goals and adjust treatment plans based on new information. This finding is consistent with Beacher and Sweeney (2018), who emphasize that effective communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals lead to improved outcomes in managing cancer-related oral health issues.

Timely communication between laboratory specialists and clinicians was particularly important in managing infections. Laboratory results often dictate the course of treatment, and delays in communication can significantly affect patient outcomes. The open communication between pharmacists, dentists, and social workers also ensured that medications were appropriately adjusted and that patients received psychosocial support when needed.

However, the findings also revealed that communication barriers could hinder care coordination, especially when logistical challenges such as scheduling conflicts or delays in lab results arose. Similar challenges have been documented in other studies on interdisciplinary care, where the complexity of coordinating multiple healthcare professionals can lead to inefficiencies and delays in treatment (Chuang et al., 2016). Addressing these barriers is essential for optimizing the interdisciplinary approach and improving patient care.

#### Challenges in Interdisciplinary Care

Logistical barriers and differing treatment priorities were key challenges identified by participants. Coordinating schedules between various professionals, particularly in a busy hospital environment, often

proved difficult, resulting in delays or missed opportunities for collaboration. This is consistent with Chuang et al. (2016), who noted that logistical challenges frequently impact the efficacy of interdisciplinary care teams, particularly in high-demand settings such as oncology.

Another challenge was the differing priorities between professionals. For example, oncologists often focus on continuing cancer treatment without interruptions, while dentists and pharmacists prioritize addressing oral health complications that may impede treatment. This sometimes led to conflicts when determining the best course of action for the patient. However, the need to find a balance between these priorities is critical, as both cancer treatment and oral health are interdependent in ensuring overall patient well-being. Similar conflicts have been observed in previous research, where differing medical priorities led to delays or conflicting approaches to patient care (Jensen et al., 2010).

#### Impact on Patient Outcomes

Despite the challenges, the interdisciplinary approach to managing oral health complications had a positive impact on patient outcomes. By working together, healthcare professionals were able to provide more timely interventions, reducing the severity of complications such as mucositis and infections. This finding aligns with existing literature, which highlights the importance of early and coordinated interventions in improving patient outcomes (Epstein et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the holistic approach provided by the interdisciplinary team significantly improved patients' quality of life. The combination of medical treatment and psychosocial support helped patients cope with the physical and emotional burdens of cancer treatment. This echoes findings by Panel et al. (2011) who reported that psychosocial support plays a crucial role in helping cancer patients manage treatment-related side effects, including those affecting oral health.

#### Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have several important implications for clinical practice in managing oral health complications in cancer patients. First, hospitals should prioritize interdisciplinary team meetings to facilitate regular communication between all members involved in the patient's care. These meetings allow team members to align their treatment goals and ensure that each aspect of the patient's care is addressed comprehensively.

Second, implementing structured communication protocols, such as standardized checklists or digital communication platforms, could help reduce delays and ensure that important information is shared promptly. This would improve the overall efficiency of care delivery and reduce the risk of communication breakdowns.

Finally, efforts should be made to address logistical challenges in coordinating care. This could include developing more flexible scheduling systems or designating specific times for interdisciplinary teams to meet and discuss complex cases. By addressing these logistical issues, healthcare teams can work more efficiently and ensure that patients receive timely, coordinated care.

#### Study Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the interdisciplinary management of oral health complications in cancer patients, it has several limitations. The sample size was relatively small and limited to a single tertiary hospital, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other healthcare settings.

Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from interviews, which may be subject to recall bias. Future research could expand on these findings by including a larger sample from multiple hospitals and incorporating observational data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of interdisciplinary care in oncology.

### Conclusion

This study highlights the critical role of interdisciplinary collaboration in managing oral health complications in cancer patients. By working together, laboratory specialists, dentists, pharmacists, and social workers can provide comprehensive care that addresses both the medical and psychosocial needs of patients. Despite challenges such as logistical barriers and differing treatment priorities, the benefits of interdisciplinary care are clear: improved patient outcomes, reduced complications, and enhanced quality of life. Addressing these challenges through structured communication protocols and better coordination can further optimize the care of cancer patients, ensuring that oral health issues do not impede their overall treatment and recovery.

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