

Microsurgical Reconstruction of Oral Cavity Defects: an 8-year Experience with 157 Consecutive Cases

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Introduction. Microvascular free tissue transfer has become a significant factor in the reconstruction of oral cavity defects. Various donor sites are available to enable anatomical and functional repair of a defect.

Aim, Materials and Methods. All free vascularized tissue transfers performed during the period from September, 2008 to December, 2016 were retrieved from hospital's database and analysed with regard to the surgical defect, chosen donor site and complications.

Results. During the 8-year period a total of 157 patients with oral cavity cancer were treated. A total of 160 free- flap reconstructions were performed for 157 patients. With regard to donor site selection, the first choice of radial forearm flap was used in 83 patients, followed by the free fibula in 39 patients, lateral arm flap in 35 patients, anterior-lateral thigh flap in 2 patients and vascularised iliac crest in one patient. Among the 160 free- flap reconstructions, a total flap loss rate of 1.8% was observed. Hematoma and healing by secondary intension were most common complications.

Conclusions. Immediate repair of intraoral defects using free tissue transfer is a successful and reliable method and is becoming the gold standard at many institutions. The complication rate is low once experience with these techniques has been acquired.