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Abstract

[REIS, Sílvia Regina de Almeida](#); [ESPIRITO SANTO, Alexandre Ribeiro do](#); [ANDRADE, Miguel Gustavo Setúbal](#) and [SADIGURSKY, Moyses](#). Cytologic alterations in the oral mucosa after chronic exposure to ethanol. *Braz. oral res.* [online]. 2006, vol.20, n.2, pp. 97-102. ISSN 1806-8324. doi: 10.1590/S1806-83242006000200002.

The effects of ethanol alone on the oral mucosa are still poorly understood, especially because there are few non-smoking chronic consumers of alcoholic beverages. The aim of this study was to evaluate the frequency of micronucleus, abnormal nucleus/cytoplasm ratio, pyknosis, karyorrhexis and karyolysis in exfoliated cells from the buccal mucosa and from the lateral border of the tongue in 36 non-smoker alcoholics (ethanol group) and 18 non-smokers and non-drinkers (control group). The Papanicolaou method was used. Since alcoholics generally have hepatobiliary involvement, the association between serum gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase (GGT) and some of the analyzed oral mucosa alterations was also investigated. The ethanol group showed a significant increase in the frequency of all alterations analyzed in the tongue cells when compared with the control group ($p < 0.01$; Mann-Whitney). However, the presence of these changes in buccal mucosa cells was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$; Mann-Whitney). In the ethanol group, the correlation between serum GGT and the frequency of micronucleus and abnormal nucleus/cytoplasm ratio in oral mucosa cells was not significant ($p > 0.05$; Spearman). In conclusion, chronic exposure to ethanol may be associated with carcinogenic cytologic changes in the oral mucosa, even in the absence of tobacco smoking. These alterations were not correlated with hepatobiliary injury.

Keywords : Cytology; Mouth mucosa; Ethanol; Carcinogens.

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