

# Can chewing gum make a difference for cancer patients?

A Ph.d. project at Odense University Hospital (OUH) in Denmark investigates the possibility to use chewing gum to ease the problem of dry mouth for patients, who have received radiation treatment for head and neck cancer. Fertin Pharma supports the study in order to help bring new insights into the medical application of chewing gum.

About one fifth of head and neck cancer patients suffer from dry mouth during and after radiation treatment. Dry mouth may seriously affect dental health and the quality of life of patients, and the oncology department at Odense University Hospital carries out several research projects to ease the late complications of radiation therapy.

One of the Ph.d. projects, carried out by oncologist Julie Killerup Kaae, aims at reducing the symptoms of radiation-induced dry mouth syndrome by the use of chewing gum.

The clinical study, which included 91 patient and was completed in 2018, clearly showed the potential of gum to ease the symptoms of dry mouth and improve the quality of life for the patients. Chewing gum increased the salivary flow rate and reduced the viscosity of the saliva significantly. Patients, who were part of the trial, reported a significant reduction in symptoms of dryness and experienced improved quality of life on a range of specific parameters.

Fertin Pharma developed a unique chewing gum variant based on highly specific requirements for the study. Since patients with dry mouth are highly sensitive to taste, the flavouring of the gum was toned down to a mild taste. The gum base used was softer than ordinary gum to make it easy to chew even with the reduced amount of saliva, which is found in this patient group.



"We are pleased that we can do our part in helping patients regain their quality of life in close collaboration with the highly dedicated researchers at OUH. As Fertin Pharma diversifies into more medical applications, we appreciate opportunities like this to get closer to our users and investigating different delivery platforms. The insights gained from this clinical study will be useful in developing our portfolio within dry-mouths further," says Birgitte Hyrup Andersen, Clinical Research Manager at Fertin Pharma.

Access the full report here: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167814019331020>



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