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Overexpression of autophagy-related 16-like 1 in patients with oral squamous cell carcinoma.

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Abstract

Dyregulation of autophagy has been reported in various human cancers including **oral squamous cell carcinoma** (OSCC). The objective of this study was to link expression of **autophagy-related 16-like 1** (ATG16L1), a protein essential for autophagosome formation, to clinical outcome in a cohort of 90 OSCC **patients**. Expression level of ATG16L1 was assessed by immunohistochemistry and an immunoreactivity score (IRS), ranging from 0 to 9, was assigned to each case. The results were correlated with clinicopathological parameters and outcome of **patients**. Twenty-seven **patients** (30%) exhibited ATG16L1 **overexpression** as indicated by an IRS of 9. **Overexpression** of ATG16L1 was significantly associated with disease stage ($p = 0.001$), size ($p = 0.031$) of the tumor, lymph node metastasis ($p = 0.004$), and histological grade ($p = 0.038$). ATG16L1 **overexpression** significantly affected the overall survival ($p = 0.020$) and time to recurrence ($p = 0.031$) of OSCC **patients** in Kaplan-Meier analysis. The present study suggested that ATG16L1 may be used as a biomarker for selecting OSCC **patients** with a more aggressive phenotype.

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