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Topic of Research:- Incidence & Prevalence of Oral Candidal Colonisation in patients with Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate.

KEY FINDINGS

Congenital cleft exhibit a notably high prevalence, particularly in the Asian countries and further in the Indian subcontinent. Human oral cavity is inhabited by a range of microorganisms many of which are commensals however, under conditions leading to disturbance in their existence; they can convert into pathogenic agents. *Candida* is one such ubiquitously present fungal agent which is known to cause debilitating disease especially in immunocompromised individuals. India being a tropical country, the environmental conditions are ideal for the growth and propagation of fungal organism including *Candida*. Considering the highly invasive nature of oral fungal infection, specifically that of *Candida*, the increased risk of developing these infections in the Indian subcontinent, the prevalence rate of orofacial cleft in the country, and the inherent increased risk of these individuals developing higher number of infections, including fungal infections, it becomes extremely important to comprehend individual *Candida* species in orofacial cleft patients. This will not only facilitate the delivery of enhanced patient care but will also allow us to take measures that can help prevent and counter these infections in a better planned manner with inclusion of healthcare individuals from different specializations and provide a holistic and comprehensive, multi-disciplinary patient care not only at dedicated centres but also in multi-speciality centres. This gained knowledge can then also be disseminated among the masses and primary and secondary health care centres in rural regions of the country where maximum cases of cleft deformity are seen and are first addressed.