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Risk Factors For Thyroid Cancer In Sicily (Italy): A Case-Control Study

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Introduction: Thyroid cancer incidence rates have been increasing worldwide but the reason behind this is unclear. The only two clear risk factors for thyroid cancer are exposure to ionizing radiation and prior benign thyroid hyperplasia. Our aim is to establish the role of environmental and lifestyle factors on the risk of developing thyroid cancer in Sicily.

Methods: We conducted a hospital-based case-control study in Sicily (southern Italy). The study included 80 histological confirmed thyroid carcinoma cases. Cases were 62 women (77,5%) and 18 males, aged 21–87 when diagnosed between the years 2009 and 2014. Controls (n=80) were matched to each case on age and gender. Papillary and follicular carcinomas were considered together. Conditional logistic regression was used to estimate ORs and their 95% CIs adjusted for potential confounders. **Results:** As has been shown by other studies, we found that education level (OR=8.2, 95% CI=1.3-50.7), high body mass index (OR=12.1, 95% CI=1.4-100), body surface area (OR=3.5, 95% CI=1,2-10.1), size of waist (OR=16.7, 95% CI=1.2-224), menopause (OR=5.3, 95% CI=1.5-18.3) and alcohol consumption (OR=6.1, 95% CI=1.2-29.3) are risk factors significantly associated with thyroid cancer. **Conclusions:** The causal relationship for some of the risk factors considered remains open to discussion, probably because of the small sample size. Instead the potentially modifiable risk factors identified may represent indicators of risk interventions likely relevant on a public health scale.

