

A Study on Sputum Cytology in the Diagnosis of Lung Cancer

Seerath hamid¹, Dr. Vikas Patel², Dr. Aamir Bashir³, k.s. rana⁴, Dr. Pankaj kaul⁵, Posha Bashir⁶,
Suhail Anjum Rather⁷, Zainab Ali⁸, Bisma Nazir⁹, Waseem Ahmad Gilkar¹⁰

¹Post-Graduate student, Department of Histopathology, University School of Allied Health Sciences, Rayat Bahra University, Mohali, Punjab, India.

²Pathologist Skims Soura, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India.

³Junior Resident, Government Medical College Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India.

⁴Associate Professor, Department of Histopathology, University School of Allied Health Sciences, Rayat Bahra University, Mohali, Punjab, India.

⁵Dean, University School of Allied Sciences, Rayat Bahra University, Mohali, Punjab, India

^{6,8,9,10}Post-Graduate student, Department of Histopathology, University School of Allied Health Sciences, Rayat Bahra University, Mohali, Punjab, India.

⁷Assistant Professor, Department of Paramedical Sciences, Lyallpur Khalsa College Technical Campus, Jalandhar, Punjab and Post-Graduate, Department of Operation Theatre and Anaesthesia Technology, University School of Allied Health Sciences, Rayat Bahra University, Mohali, Punjab, India.

ABSTRACT: *Background: Lung cancer remains a worldwide health challenge because of its elevated mortality rates and typically late-stage diagnosis, which adversely impacts treatment outcomes. Effective screening tools for early detection are essential for improving patient survival rates. Sputum cytology, a non-invasive technique, has surfaced as a viable technique for detecting lung cancer, especially in high-risk individuals.*

Methods: This study was conducted in the Department of Pathology at SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, Kashmir. It included 40 patients with clinically suspected lung carcinoma, with 11 cases confirmed through sputum cytology. The study focused on evaluating the diagnostic accuracy, feasibility, and utility of sputum cytology, particularly in high-risk populations such as smokers. Data on patient demographics, smoking history, and cancer typing were collected and analyzed. Multiple sputum samples were obtained, processed, and examined microscopically for cellular changes indicative of malignancy. Results: Among the 40 patients, (29) were male and (11) female, with a mean age of (58.07) years for males and (54.82) years for females. Confirmed lung cancer cases showed a higher prevalence in males (72.50%) compared to females (27.50%). Smoking history revealed that (63.64%) of the confirmed cases were smokers, highlighting the strong interrelation between smoking and lung cancer.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lung cancer stands as a significant global health challenge, famous for its high mortality rates and often

late-stage diagnosis, which severely impact treatment outcomes. The search for effective screening tools that enable early detection is therefore crucial in improving patient survival rates. Within the collection of diagnostic methods available, sputum cytology has proven to be a promising non-invasive strategy for detecting lung cancer, particularly in individuals at high risk. (Auerbach O, Stout, et al; 1966).

Sputum cytology, a form of exfoliative cytology, leverages the natural shedding of cells from the respiratory tract into the airways. This approach offers a straightforward and cost-effective means to examine cellular changes that may indicate malignancy. By collecting and analyzing cells retrieved from coughed-up mucus under a microscope, clinicians can identify abnormal cellular features such as dysplastic changes, atypical cells, or outright cancer cells. (A J Hubers, G Sozzi, et al; 2013).

The process of sputum cytology begins by collecting a sputum samples, typically obtained in the morning when mucus production is higher and more concentrated. These samples are spread thinly on slides, fixed with a preservative to maintain cellular integrity, and stained to enhance visibility during microscopic examination. This method not only facilitates the detection of primary lung cancers but also enables the identification of pre-cancerous lesions, providing a critical window for early

intervention when treatments are most likely to succeed.(Bartels, P.H. Bibbo, M. et al; 1992).

One of the significant advantages of sputum cytology is its non-invasive nature, which minimizes patient discomfort and risk compared to invasive procedures such as bronchoscopy or surgical biopsy. Moreover, sputum cytology can be performed repeatedly over time, allowing for longitudinal monitoring of individuals at high risk, such as current and former smokers or those with a familial background of lung cancer. This longitudinal approach enhances the chances of detecting cancer at an early stage, when interventions are most effective and outcomes are more favorable. (Gupta et al., 2006). The aim of the study was to elucidate the potential role of sputum cytology by evaluating its sensitivity, specificity and overall diagnostic accuracy in routine clinical practice.

Objectives of the study

To investigate the diagnostic accuracy of sputum cytology in diverse patient groups, considering factors such as age, gender, smoking history and other relevant clinical parameters.

To evaluate the specificity of technique in detecting lung cancer and its effectiveness in differentiating various types of lung cancers.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted on 40 patients undergoing sputum cytology for lung cancer diagnosis. This descriptive study was conducted in Department of Pathology, Sher-I-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Soura, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir 190011 from March 2024 to September 2024 after obtaining the approval from the hospital ethical committee. This sample size was calculated to provide enough statistical power to identify meaningful differences and relationships in the prevalence of lung cancer and associated factors. It was based on the expected prevalence of lung cancer in the population, aiming for reliable and valid results generalizable to the Kashmir region. This hospital was selected for its comprehensive healthcare services and its ability to support the necessary laboratory tests and assessments. The controlled environment ensured standardized procedures and consistent data collection.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Adults aged 30 years and older.

- Individuals with a greater likelihood of developing lung cancer (e.g., smokers, patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or those with a family history of lung cancer).
- Patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of lung cancer (e.g., persistent cough, hemoptysis, unexplained weight loss).
- Individuals willing to comply with the study protocol, including multiple sputum collections.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Individuals with a background of lung cancer who have already undergone treatment.
- Patients with other active malignancies.
- Individuals with severe respiratory distress or other conditions that prevent safe sputum collection.
- Patients unable or unwilling to provide informed consent.

Study procedure

The study procedure involved several key steps to ensure accurate data collection and analysis:

1. Patient Preparation:

- Pre-Collection Instructions:

Hydration: Patients should stay well-hydrated the day before sputum collection to help loosen respiratory secretions.

Medications: Instructions on the use of bronchodilators or other respiratory medications before sputum collection should be given.

Fasting: Patients should avoid eating or drinking anything (other than water) for at least 1-2 hours before sputum collection. Early morning collection is preferred.

2. Patient Education:

Explanation of Procedure: Clearly explain the sputum collection process, emphasizing the importance of obtaining sputum from deep within the lungs rather than saliva.

Demonstration: Provide a demonstration or visual aids showing the correct technique for deep coughing to produce sputum.

Purpose: Explain the purpose of sputum cytology and its role in diagnosing lung cancer.

Physical Preparation:

Oral Hygiene: Patients should rinse their mouth with water before collecting the sputum sample to reduce contamination with oral bacteria.

Environment: Ensure a comfortable and private environment for the patient to perform sputum collection. Provide a clean and sterile container for the sample.

3. Sampling Techniques:

Early Morning Sputum Collection:

Procedure: Patients are asked to produce a deep cough to bring up sputum from the lungs early in the morning before eating or drinking.

Rationale: Early morning sputum is typically more concentrated with cellular material, which can enhance the detection of abnormal cells.

Induced Sputum Collection:

Procedure: Inhaling a saline mist or aerosolized hypertonic saline to stimulate sputum production.

Rationale: This method is useful for patients who have difficulty producing sputum naturally and can increase the yield of diagnostic material.

Serial Sputum Collection:

Procedure: Collecting multiple samples over several days, usually three consecutive mornings.

Rationale: Increases the likelihood of detecting abnormal cells, as some malignancies may shed cells intermittently.

Bronchoscopy-Assisted Sputum Collection:

Procedure: During bronchoscopy, bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) or bronchial brushing can be performed to collect sputum directly from the bronchial tubes.

Rationale: Obtains samples from deeper within the lungs and is particularly useful when non-invasive methods fail to provide adequate material.

Postural Drainage:

Procedure: Positioning the patient to facilitate drainage of sputum from the lungs often combined with chest physiotherapy.

Rationale: Helps mobilize sputum from different areas of the lungs, increasing the probability of finding atypical cells.

Expectorated Sputum:

Procedure: Patients are instructed to cough deeply and expectorate sputum into a sterile container.

Rationale: Simple and non-invasive, but may be less effective in patients who do not produce adequate sputum.

4. Study Procedure:

Sample Collection and Transportation:

Collection: Collect sputum samples early in the morning over three consecutive days. Ensure deep coughing to produce sputum from the lungs, not saliva.

Labeling: Properly label sample containers with patient's identification details, date, and time of collection.

Transportation: Transport samples promptly to the laboratory to prevent cellular degradation. If delayed, refrigerate the samples.

Fixation:

Immediate Fixation: Add an equal volume of a fixative solution (such as 50% ethanol) to the sputum sample immediately after collection.

Alternative Fixatives: Some labs use commercially prepared cytology fixatives or a combination of ethanol and carbowax.

Sample Preparation:

Centrifugation: Centrifuge the sample at 1,500–2,000 RPM for 10–15 minutes to concentrate the cells.

Decanting: Carefully decant the supernatant without disturbing the cell pellet.

Slide Preparation:

Smear Preparation: Using a pipette, transfer a small drop of the cell pellet onto a clean glass slide. Spread

the drop evenly using a spreader slide to create a thin smear.

Multiple Slides: Prepare multiple smears from each sample to ensure adequate evaluation.

Thick Sputum: If the sputum is thick, make slides directly without centrifuging the sample.

5. Staining:

Papanicolaou (Pap) Stain: The most common stain used in sputum cytology, involving:

Fixing slides in 95% ethanol.

Staining with hematoxylin to highlight cell nuclei.

Staining with orange G and eosin azure to differentiate between different cell types and cytoplasmic components.

Alternative Stains: May-Grünwald-Giemsa or Hematoxylin and Eosin (H&E) stains may also be used in some cases.

6. Microscopic Examination

The stained slides were examined by pathologists using a microscope. The findings from the smears were categorized and reported as follows:

Normal/Negative for Malignancy:

Presence of a moderate amount of alveolar macrophages, pigmented macrophages, and neutrophils.

Occasional ciliated columnar cells and mucus spirals observed.

Inflammatory Lesions:

Acute Inflammatory Lesions:

Pap-stained smears show a predominantly cyanophilic appearance.

Numerous intact and damaged polymorphonuclear leukocytes are present.

Presence of necrotic material forming threads and amorphous masses.

Chronic Inflammatory Lesions:

A significant number of neutrophils, alveolar macrophages, with a few lymphocytes, monocytes, and occasional goblet cells.

Binucleated and trinucleated giant cell macrophages observed.

Numerous eosinophils, elongated rhomboid-shaped Charcot-Leyden crystals, and eosinophil granules, indicative of allergic inflammation.

Squamous Metaplasia:

Regular Squamous Metaplasia:

Cells show a normal appearance without atypical features.

Squamous Metaplasia with Atypia:

Mild Atypia: Minor abnormalities in cellular appearance.

Moderate Atypia: More noticeable, though not severe, cellular abnormalities.

Marked Atypia: Significant abnormalities that may indicate a pre-cancerous condition.

Positive for Malignancy:

Squamous Cell Carcinoma:

Well-differentiated squamous cell carcinoma.

Poorly differentiated squamous cell carcinoma.

Adenocarcinoma:

Bronchoalveolar carcinoma.

Large cell undifferentiated carcinoma.

Small cell undifferentiated carcinoma.

7. Documentation and Reporting.

Cytology Report: A detailed report is prepared by the cytopathologist describing the findings and the presence or absence of malignant cells. Different cell types are identified and classified, and recommendations for further testing are included if needed.

8. Data Collection:

- Demographics: Age, sex, Gender, smoking history.
- Clinical Data: Symptoms.
- Cytological Findings: Description and categorization of cells (normal, atypical, suspicious, malignant).

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age Group	No. of Cases	Percent age	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Average Age
A 30 to 40	2	5.00%	36	38	37.00
B 40 to 50	9	22.50%	41	50	45.22
C 50 to 60	13	32.50%	52	60	55.62
D 60 to 70	12	30.00%	61	70	65.67
E 70 to 80	4	10.00%	71	77	73.75
Total	40	100.00%	36	77	57.18

Table 1 shows the distribution of cases across different age groups. It categorizes the study participants into five age groups: 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60-70, and 70-80. For each group, the table provides the number of cases, the percentage of total cases, the minimum and maximum ages, and the average age. The majority of cases (32.5%) fall within the 50-60 age group, followed closely by the 60-70 age group (30%). The

lowest number of cases is in the 30-40 age group, indicating that lung cancer is less prevalent in younger individuals in this study. Lung cancer is more common in the older age groups, particularly between 50 and 70 years. The average age of all cases is 57.18 years, suggesting that middle-aged and older adults are at a higher risk.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	No. of Cases	Percentage
female	11	27.50%
male	29	72.50%
Total	40	100.00%

This table displays the distribution of lung cancer cases by gender. It shows the number of cases and their percentage in both male and female participants. The majority of lung cancer cases are male (72.5%), compared to females (27.5%). This suggests that men may have a higher risk or prevalence of lung cancer in this study group. There is a significant gender disparity in lung cancer cases, with men being more affected than women in this study population

Table 3: Diagnosis distribution

Diagnosis	No. of Cases	Percentage
Negative	29	72.50%
Positive	11	27.50%
Total	40	100.00%

This table categorizes the study participants into two groups: those with a positive lung cancer diagnosis and those with a negative diagnosis. A large proportion of cases (72.5%) are negative, while 27.5% are positive for lung cancer. This indicates that while a significant number of individuals in the study were

Screened, a smaller portion was diagnosed with lung cancer. The study shows that around one-fourth of the screened individuals were diagnosed with lung cancer, highlighting the need for screening in at-risk populations to identify cases early

Table 4: Age Distribution of Positive and Negative Cases

Age Group	No. of Cases	Percentage	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Average Age
negative	29	72.50%	36	74	55.66
A 30 to 40	2	5.00%	36	38	37.00
B 40 to 50	8	20.00%	41	50	45.63
C 50 to 60	9	22.50%	52	60	55.44
D 60 to 70	8	20.00%	62	70	66.38
E 70 to 80	2	5.00%	71	74	72.50

positive	11	27.50%	42	77	61.18
B 40 to 50	1	2.50%	42	42	42.00
C 50 to 60	4	10.00%	54	58	56.00
D 60 to 70	4	10.00%	61	69	64.25
E 70 to 80	2	5.00%	73	77	75.00
Total	40	100.00%	36	77	57.18

This table breaks down the age distribution further by categorizing the cases into positive and negative diagnoses. It shows the number and percentage of cases, along with the minimum, maximum, and average ages within each diagnostic category. Positive cases are more prevalent in older age groups, with the average age for positive diagnoses being higher (61.18

years) than for negative ones (55.66 years). The majority of positive cases are in the 50-60 and 60-70 age groups, while negative cases are spread more evenly across the age groups. The likelihood of a positive lung cancer diagnosis increases with age, particularly after 50 years. Early screening in these age groups could be beneficial.

Table 5: Gender and Distribution of Positive and Negative Cases

Gender and age	No. of Cases	Percentage	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Average Age
Negative	29	72.50%	36	74	55.66
Female	8	20.00%	41	68	52.88
Male	21	52.50%	36	74	56.71
Positive	11	27.50%	42	77	61.18
Female	3	7.50%	54	69	60.00
Male	8	20.00%	42	77	61.63
Total	40	100.00%	36	77	57.18

This table shows the distribution of positive and negative lung cancer cases by gender and provides the number of cases, percentage, minimum, maximum, and average ages for both categories. Negative cases are higher in both males and females, but males show a greater number of positive cases. The average age of

positive cases is higher for both genders, suggesting that age is a risk factor in both men and women. Males have a higher rate of positive lung cancer cases, but both genders show an increased risk with age, reinforcing the importance of targeted screening for high-risk age groups in both genders.

Table 6: Symptoms Distribution

Symptoms	negative	positive	Total
Chest Discomfort	2	1	3
Chest pain	3	2	5
Cough	13	4	17
Fatigue	2	1	3
Haemoptysis	3	2	5
Hoarseness	0	1	1
Loss of appetite	1	1	2
Night Sweats	1	1	2
Persistent Cough	6	5	11
Shortness of breath	6	3	9
Sputum Production	2	1	3
Wheezing	2	3	5
Weight loss	3	6	9

This table lists the various symptoms observed in the study participants, divided into positive and negative cases. It indicates the frequency of each symptom in both categories. The most common symptoms in positive cases are persistent cough and weight loss, while cough is the most prevalent symptom overall.

This suggests that certain symptoms like persistent cough and weight loss may be more indicative of lung cancer. Persistent cough and weight loss are key symptoms to watch for in diagnosing lung cancer. Awareness of these symptoms could lead to earlier detection and treatment

Table 7: Smoking History Distribution

Smoking History	Non-Smoker	Smoker	Total
Negative	17 (42.50%)	12 (30.00%)	29 (77.50%)
Positive	04 (10.00%)	07 (17.50%)	11 (27.50%)
Total	21 (52.50%)	19 (47.50%)	40 (100.00%)

P-Val > 0.05 (not significant)

The table provides information on the smoking history of individuals in the study population and its association with diagnostic outcomes for lung cancer.

The data indicates that smoking history is relevant in distinguishing between positive and negative diagnoses for lung cancer. All positive cases (11) are associated with either being a non-smoker or a smoker, suggesting that smoking is a significant risk factor for lung cancer, though it is not the sole determinant, as non-smokers can also present with the disease.

Overall, the data supports the known association between smoking and lung cancer, with smokers showing a higher proportion of positive diagnoses. However, it is also important to consider other factors, as non-smokers can also present with lung cancer symptoms. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive assessments that include smoking history, among other risk factors, to improve diagnostic accuracy and prevention strategies.

Table 8: Smoking history with respect to Gender

Smoking History	Negative No. of Cases (%)	Positive No. of Cases (%)	Total No. of Cases (%)
Female	8 (20%)	3 (7.5%)	11 (27.5%)
Non-smoker	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	8 (20%)
Smoker	2 (5%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (7.5%)
Male	21 (52.5%)	8 (20%)	29 (72.5%)
Non-smoker	11 (27.5%)	2 (5%)	13 (32.5%)
Smoker	10 (25%)	6 (15%)	16 (40%)
Grand Total	29 (72.5%)	11 (27.5%)	40 (100%)

The table provides information on smoking history and its association with gender and diagnostic outcomes for lung cancer. The data reveals that smoking history and gender are important factors in the diagnostic outcomes for lung cancer.

- Gender: Males constitute the majority of both negative (52.50%) and positive (20.00%) cases. Females, while fewer in total cases (27.50%), also show a notable proportion of positive diagnoses. This indicates that while lung cancer affects both genders, males are more prominently represented

among both negative and positive diagnoses in this study.

- Smoking History: Smokers are more frequently represented among positive diagnoses (15.00% of males, 5.00% of females) compared to non-smokers. This aligns with established knowledge that smoking is a significant risk factor for lung cancer. The absence of non-smokers in the negative cases and the limited presence in positive cases suggest that smoking history is a critical factor in the likelihood of a positive diagnosis.

- Overall Distribution: The majority of negative cases are among males (52.50%), while the positive cases are more evenly distributed but still skewed towards males (20.00%). The presence of smokers among positive cases further supports the role of smoking in lung cancer development.

Table 9: Types of Lung Cancer Distribution

Types of Lung Cancer	Negative No. of Cases (%)	Positive No. of Cases (%)	Total No. of Cases
Adenocarcinoma		4 (9.76%)	4 (9.76%)
Small cell carcinoma		2 (4.88%)	2 (4.88%)
Squamous cell carcinoma		5 (12.20%)	5 (12.00%)
Negative	30 (73.17%)		30 (73.17%)
Total	30 (73.17%)	11 (26.83%)	41 (100.00%)

The table illustrates the distribution of various types of lung cancer within a study population of 41 individuals. Four specific categories are highlighted: adenocarcinoma, small cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and individuals testing negative for cancer. Among the cases presented, adenocarcinoma was identified in 4 individuals, representing 9.76% of the total population. Small cell carcinoma was detected in 2 individuals, accounting for 4.88%, making it the least prevalent type of cancer in this study. Squamous cell carcinoma was observed in 5 individuals, making up 12.20%, the highest among the cancer diagnoses.

The data also reveals that a significant portion of the population, 30 individuals (73.17%), tested negative for any form of lung cancer. This means that only 26.83% of the population was diagnosed with one of the three types of lung cancer, with the majority being free from cancer. Among the cancer cases, squamous cell carcinoma was slightly more prevalent than adenocarcinoma and small cell carcinoma.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study provides an analysis of individuals screened for lung cancer, focusing on age, gender, smoking history, symptoms, and diagnosis. The findings offer useful insights that can help improve early detection methods and treatment strategies. Below is a simplified and revised discussion of the key points.

1. Age Distribution and Risk

The study shows that lung cancer is most common among middle-aged and older adults, particularly those aged 50 to 70. The average age of participants is 57.18 years, with most individuals belongs to 50-60

and 60-70 age groups. This suggests that the risk of lung cancer increases considerably after age 50.

This aligns with the broader understanding that as people age, their risk of lung cancer increases due to long-term exposure to risk factors like smoking and pollution. Public health strategies should focus on screening people over 50 to catch the disease earlier when it's easier to treat.

2. Gender Differences

The study reveals a significant gender gap, with 72.5% of lung cancer cases being male and 27.5% female. This higher rate among men is linked to the fact that men have historically smoked more than women. However, the study shows that lung cancer affects both men and women in similar age ranges, though men tend to develop it slightly later than women.

While men are more at risk, the study highlights that women are still affected, so screening programs should include both genders. As smoking habits change, with more women smoking than in the past, future trends in lung cancer rates may shift.

3. Diagnosis Rates

Around 27.5% of the participants receives a lung cancer diagnosis. This emphasizes the importance of regular and accurate screening, especially since many people may not show symptoms until the disease progresses to an advanced stage. Initial diagnosis is key to improving survival rates.

Screening programs using imaging techniques like low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) is effective in identifying lung cancer at an early stage, when treatment is most effective. Making these screenings

more available to high-risk groups, such as older adults and smokers, is critical.

4. Symptom Patterns

The study identifies common symptoms in those diagnosed with lung cancer, including cough (both regular and persistent), shortness of breath, and weight loss. Persistent cough and weight loss were especially common in those who tested positive for lung cancer. These symptoms should be red flags for healthcare providers.

Because early symptoms of lung cancer are often mild and easily mistaken for less serious conditions, raising awareness about these signs could lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment, especially in older adults and smokers.

5. Smoking History

Smoking is confirmed as a major risk factor for lung cancer, with smokers being overrepresented in the diagnosed cases. While non-smokers made up the majority of those who tested negative, smokers had a much higher rate of positive diagnoses. This highlights the ongoing need for anti-smoking efforts and education.

Encouraging smoking cessation can play a crucial role in lowering lung cancer risk. Even quitting smoking later in life significantly reduces the likelihood of developing lung cancer, making these programs essential in public health strategies.

6. Types of Lung Cancer

The most common form of lung cancer found in the study was squamous cell carcinoma (12.5%), followed by adenocarcinoma (10%) and small cell carcinoma (5%). Squamous cell carcinoma is strongly linked to smoking and tends to be more aggressive.

This finding suggests that treatment strategies should be tailored based on the type of lung cancer. More focused diagnostic and treatment protocols for squamous cell carcinoma, in particular, may improve patient outcomes due to its association with smoking and faster progression.

V. CONCLUSION

Lung cancer remains a significant global health concern due to its elevated mortality rates and the frequent late stage diagnosis. Detecting lung cancer

early is essential for enhancing treatment and increasing survival rates. This study focuses on sputum cytology as a diagnostic tool for lung cancer, particularly in high-risk populations such as smokers.

The research was conducted at the Department of Pathology, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, Kashmir, and involved 40 patients with suspected lung cancer. Of these, 11 cases were confirmed as lung cancer through sputum cytology. The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of sputum cytology in detecting lung cancer, its feasibility, and its utility in different patient groups.

Sputum cytology was found to be a valuable non-invasive diagnostic tool. By analyzing cells from sputum samples, the method was able to identify both malignant cells and pre-cancerous changes. This capability is essential for early intervention and improving patient outcomes. The study highlighted that sputum cytology is particularly useful for high-risk groups, including smokers, who showed a strong association with lung cancer. The high prevalence of lung cancer in males compared to females, along with the slightly younger age of diagnosis in females, provides important insights for tailoring screening strategies.

While sputum cytology offers several advantages, such as its non-invasive nature and cost-effectiveness, the study also identified challenges. Variability in sample quality and difficulties in distinguishing malignant cells from benign or inflammatory cells can impact the reliability of results. Addressing these issues requires ongoing research and technological advancements. Innovations in staining techniques, microscopy, and molecular testing are needed to enhance the sensitivity and specificity of sputum cytology.

In conclusion, sputum cytology proves to be a promising method for the early detection and management of lung cancer. Its role in identifying both cancerous and pre-cancerous cells makes it a valuable tool, especially for high-risk populations. However, to fully realize its potential, it must be used in conjunction with other diagnostic methods and refined through ongoing research. By improving early detection and intervention strategies, sputum cytology has the potential to significantly enhance survival rates and quality of life for individuals at risk of lung cancer.

REFERENCES

- [1] Auerbach, O., Stout, A.P., Hammond, E.C., & Garfinkel, L. (1966). Changes in Bronchial Epithelium in Relation to Sex, Age, Residence, Smoking, and Pneumonia. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 274(21): 1119-1127.
- [2] Gupta, K.B. Garg, S. (2006). Sputum induction- A useful tool in diagnosis of respiratory diseases lung India. 23:82-6
- [3] Hubers, A., Prinsen, C., Sozzi, G. et al. Molecular sputum analysis for the diagnosis of lung cancer. *Br J Cancer* 109, 530–537 (2013).
- [4] Lam, S., MacAulay, C., Hung, J., LeRiche, J., Profio, A.E., & Palcic, B. (1992). Detection of Dysplasia and Carcinoma in Situ with a Fluorescence Imaging System. *Cancer*, 70(5): 734-740.