

ORAL CANCER AWARENESS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN ROMANIA

Christa Serban (1,2), Daria Negrut (1), Ioana Moldovan (1), Sergiu Chebici (1), Meda Lavinia Negrutiu (1), Cosmin Sinescu (1)

1- Victor Babes University of Medicine and Pharmacy Timisoara (Romania)

2 - Alliance for Oral Health Across Borders



INTRODUCTION

Romania has one of the highest incidences of oral cancer in the male population among European countries (1). Despite being more prevalent in the elderly, oral cancer is affecting younger patients as the human papilloma virus is also a major risk factor (1, 2, 3). Early diagnosis of oral cancers is crucial for enabling higher chances of survival. However oral cancer is most frequently diagnosed in advanced stages, and this may be due to the lack of public awareness of the signs, symptoms and risk factors of oral cancer (2). In order to determine appropriate awareness campaigns and programs for young people, the aim of this study was to examine the awareness of oral cancer in undergraduate students in Romania.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Informed and consenting undergraduate students studying in Timisoara, Romania filled out an online questionnaire that assessed their awareness of oral cancer signs, symptoms and risk factors. Ethical approval was obtained from Victor Babes University of Medicine and Pharmacy Timisoara. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that no identifiable data was collected. The questionnaire, consisting of 15 questions, was divided in three parts: (1) general information, (2) risk factors, signs, symptoms, (3) treatment and prevention attitudes. The questionnaire required 5 minutes to complete.

RESULTS

Most participants identified smoking to be a major risk factor for oral cancer, however alcohol and HPV were identified to a lesser degree as a risk factor (Figure 1). Identification of HPV as a risk factor was associated with students enrolled in healthcare related programs.

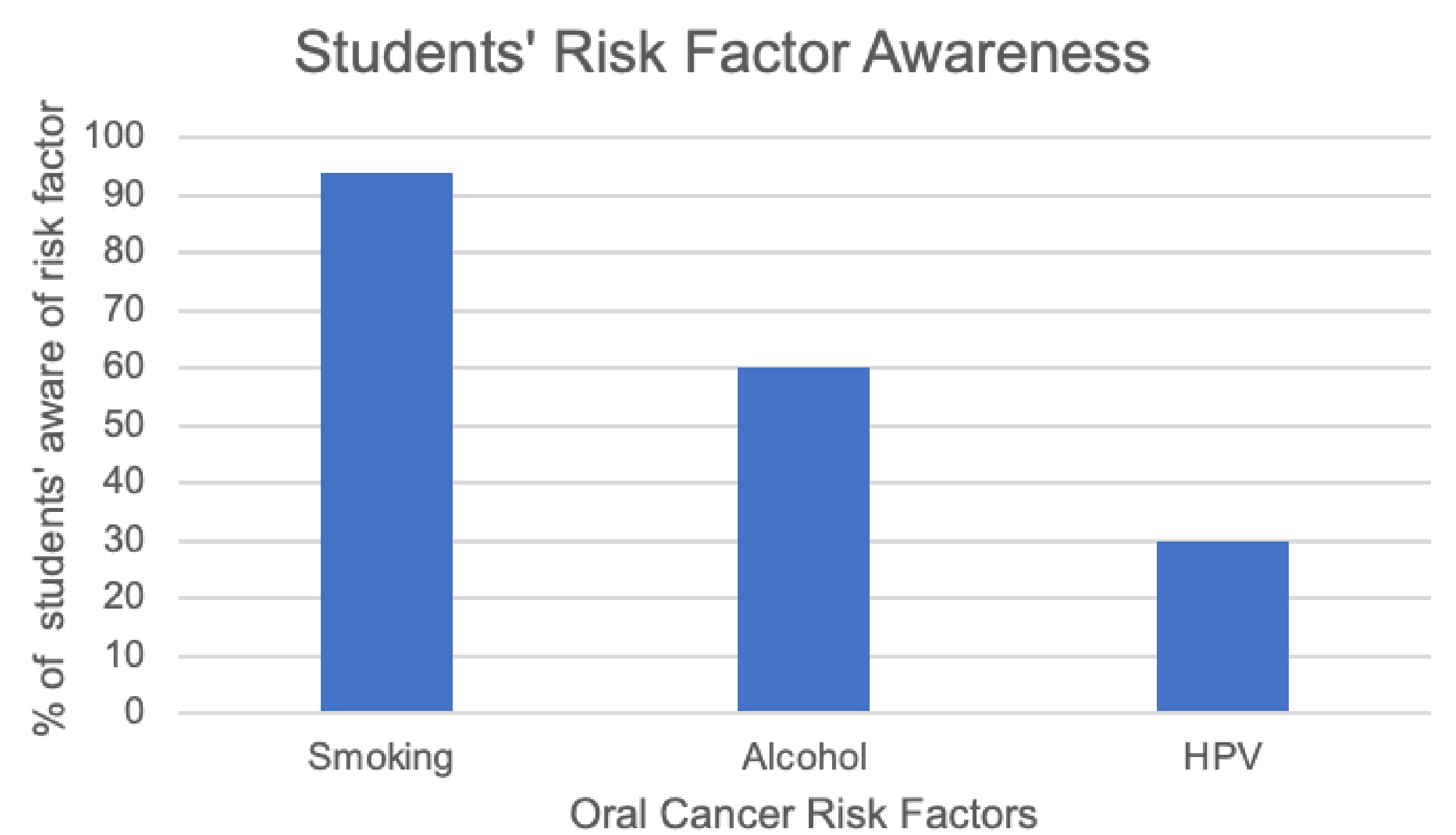


Figure 1. Awareness of Risk Factors

Participants were also asked about their attitudes regarding how lifestyles influence oral cancer risk (Figure 2).

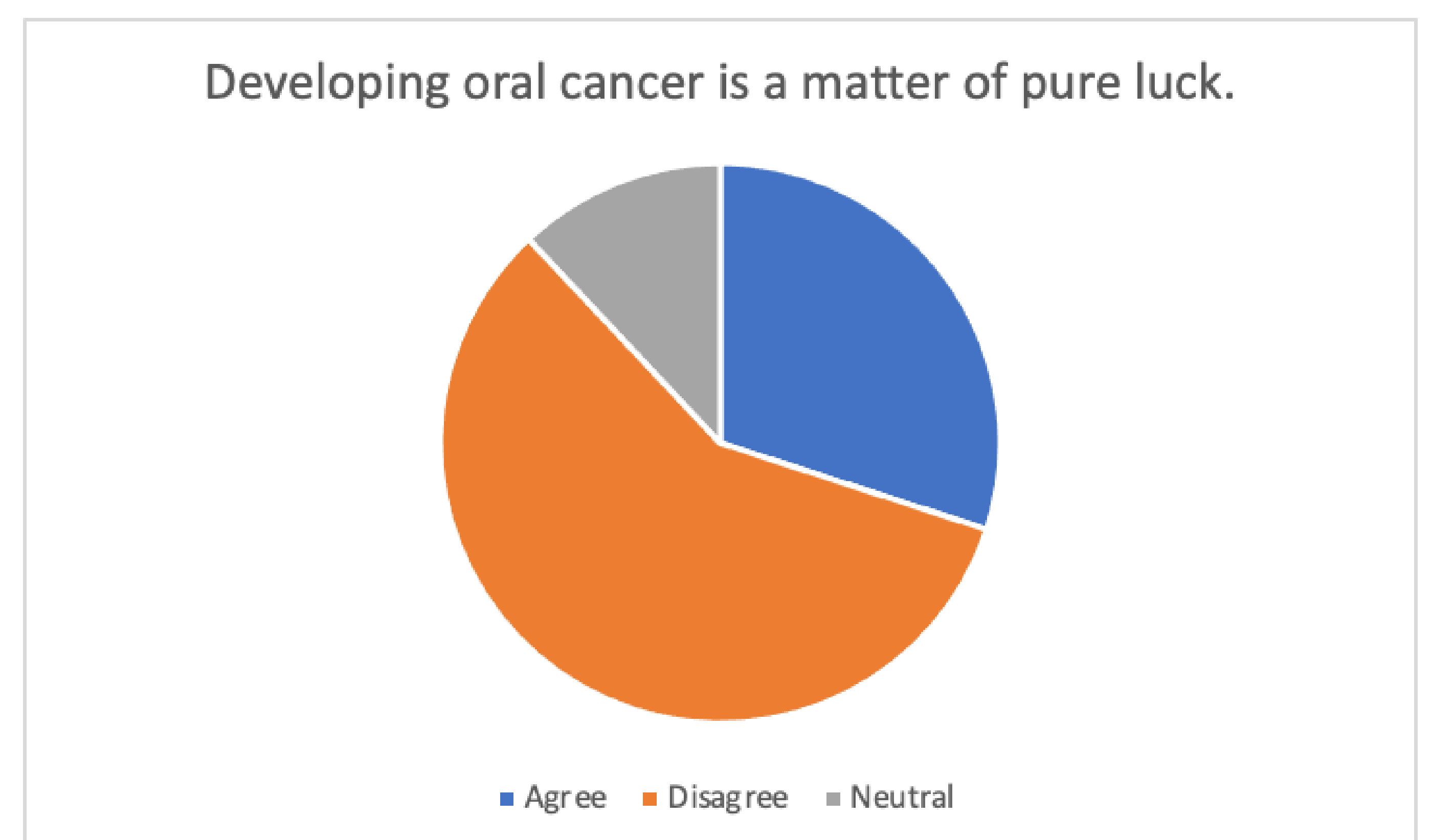


Figure 2. "Developing oral cancer is a matter of pure luck"

DISCUSSION

The preliminary results of this study highlight the need for this study to be continued and implemented at a larger scale in order to understand the level of oral cancer awareness in young people in Romania. The results will be useful in designing and implementing future awareness and screening campaigns targeted for young people in Romania.

REFERENCES



SCAN ME