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Introduction

Even with all the advances in medicine in the last years, **quality of life (QoL)** after cancer diagnosis is still deeply affected in cancer survivors. This is commonly due not only to the cancer itself, but also to secondary effects of the oncological treatment (i.e., surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy). Within head and neck cancer (HNC), trismus is commonly studied as a secondary effect, but few is known about their general QoL after treatment.

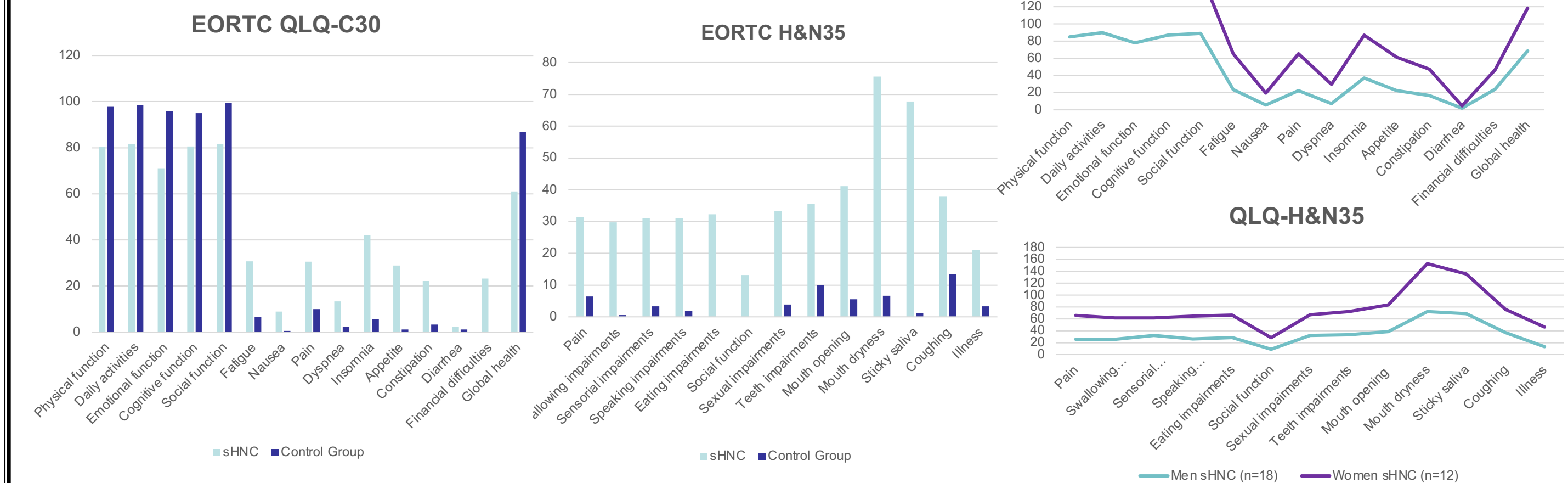
The main objective of this study is to **compare the QoL of survivors of HNC (sHNC) with healthy-matched controls**. Our secondary aim is to **compare the differences in QoL between men and women affected by HNC**.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was performed. **Demographic and clinical data** (age, gender, time since diagnosis and treatment received) were collected in one single appointment with the participants. To evaluate **QoL** in both groups, the **European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer – Quality of life questionnaires** (both the Core Questionnaire, C30, and the Head and Neck cancer specific module, HN35) were used.

Results

30 sHNC and 30 healthy-matched controls that agreed to participate voluntarily were enrolled on this study, with a mean age of 58.73±11.83. In general, sHNC perceived a higher level of symptoms when compared to the control group in all subscales of both questionnaires ($p < .005$) except for diarrhea ($p > .05$). When comparing between sexes within the sHNC group, women perceived higher levels of pain ($p < .05$) and men perceived worse social function ($p < .05$). No other statistically significant differences between groups were seen.



Conclusions

sHNC perceive a **worse QoL** when compared with healthy-matched controls. Moreover, **women sHNC perceived greater levels of pain** than men sHNC, whereas **men sHNC perceive worse social function** than women sHNC.

References

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