

# Bengal Journal of Otolaryngology and Head Neck Surgery

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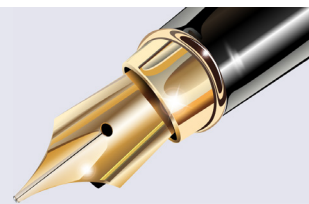
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# *From the Desk of the Editor*



Surgery became the management of choice for head and neck cancers since the mid-20th century with the advent of safe and effective modern head-neck surgeries through the pioneering works of Hayes Martin, John Conley etc. New reconstructive techniques improved the scope of wider resections without unacceptable functional burden, ensuring better local control compared to radiotherapy with good functional rehabilitation.

‘Organ preservation’ efforts in 1990s indicated that primary chemoradiation might have similar oncologic results as achieved by primary surgery with post-operative radiation. Many series in the first decade of the 21st century reported very high control rates for primary concurrent chemoradiation in oropharyngeal cancer. Despite awareness about long term toxicities (e.g., xerostomia, dysphagia, strictures, chronic pain and osteoradionecrosis), chemoradiation started getting increasing favour as the primary treatment modality in oropharyngeal cancer. If surgery cannot provide comparable local control with rapid recovery and a better quality of life, chemoradiation would emerge as the choice of primary management.

Transoral Robotic Surgery (TORS), developed at University of Pennsylvania, led by Hockstein, Weinstein, O’Malley, Snyder with its encouraging preliminary results, might open up a new vista for surgical management of oropharyngeal cancers. This computer assisted remote controlled transoral surgery precludes the necessity of external incisions and tracheostomy. Improved high definition 3D visualisation and up to 540 degrees of wristed instrumentation allow precision cutting with cautery or flexible CO2 laser.

TORS got USFDA approval in December, 2009 for surgery of malignant T1 and T2 oral, oropharyngeal, hypopharyngeal and laryngeal lesions as well as surgery for obstructive sleep apnoea (TORSa). da Vinci surgical system is the only available equipment for TORS till now and the cost is very high (approx. \$ 2.5million to buy and annual maintenance cost of around \$1,50,000).

With more than 2500 da Vinci surgical systems in use worldwide, more reports are likely to emerge in near future, which may prove TORS to be a game changer in the management of oropharyngeal cancer.

Dr Saumendra Nath Bandyopadhyay  
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