EXPRESSION OF CYTOKERATIN 13 IN EPITHELIAL DYSPLASIAS:-
- *A FLUORESCENT IMMUNOCYTOCHEMICAL STUDY*

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The microscopic changes that herald the development of malignancy, continues to fascinate pathologists even today. The cellular changes that point towards the possible subsequent development of malignancy are referred to as atypia, and the general disturbance in the epithelium is designated as **"DYSPLASIA" (Kramer I. R. H et al, 1978).**

The definition given by WHO in 1972 signifies the importance of identifying epithelial dysplasias. They have defined the precancerous lesions as a " Morphologically altered tissue in which cancer is more likely to occur than in its apparently normal counter part" **(Fishman S. L et al,1982)**. Since we all know that "Prevention is better than cure", an enormous responsibility lies in the hands of the pathologists to properly identify, grade and predict the behaviour of a dysplastic epithelium.

Several studies have been done to arrive at definitive criteria in defining an epithelium as being dysplastic. Once the epithelium is diagnosed as being dysplastic, the problem of grading them arises. It is important to know the various methods and criteria for the identification of epithelial dysplasias. The problems in evaluating dysplasias arises due to the lack of sufficient knowledge about which criteria to be considered important in predicting the future development of cancer and secondly due to the lack of objectivity in evaluating the established criteria **(Pindborg J. J et al, 1984)**.

Of the newer methods available to evaluate dysplasias, immunocytochemical method is simple, easy and reliable. It can be used to study the pattern and intensity of cytokeratin expression. Cytokeratins are a group of intermediate filaments which are expressed only in the epithelial cells. There are atleast 19 different types of these cytokeratins identified and the expression of each of these cytokeratins is very specific to the type of epithelium and to the different layers of the epithelium.

Expression of cytokeratin 13 in oral epithelial dysplasias is one of the least studied subject. It is normally present in the suprabasal cells and its