

## Introduction to the Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology focus issue on “Preneoplastic Oral Epithelial Lesions”

The Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology section is extremely fortunate to have Professor Nikolaos Nikitakis, Department of Oral Pathology and Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, serve as guest consulting editor for this issue of OOOO. Dr. Nikitakis has worked closely with an impressive group of internationally recognized authorities, both researchers and clinicians, to highlight and update readers of this journal on this chronic condition of the oral mucosa that too often leads to serious morbidity in patients worldwide.

As noted by several authors in this issue, the group of oral lesions clinically referred to as “idiopathic leukoplakia” represents a spectrum of lesions characterized by white surface epithelial change of variable thickness, surface morphology and size that cannot be more definitively classified as another entity. On clinical examination, these lesions may vary from small well-defined white patches to large verrucous-appearing processes characterized by irregular margins, focal areas of ulceration or erythema (so called “speckled leukoplakia” or “erythroleukoplakia”). While variably referred to as “epithelial precursor lesions,” “oral premalignant disease,” and “oral potentially malignant disorder” to emphasize the increased risk of developing invasive carcinoma in these lesions, the terminology “potentially preneoplastic oral epithelial lesions” is also used in this special issue in recognition of the data showing that only a subset of these lesions progress to invasive carcinoma.

In the articles included in this focus issue, the invited authors provide important insight into the diagnosis, pathogenesis, natural history and management of this important spectrum of potentially preneoplastic lesions of the epithelial lining of the oral cavity.

Respectfully submitted

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