



Managing Radiation-induced Xerostomia in Head and Neck Cancer: A 2020-2025 Systematic Review

May Ahmed Alsenani^{1,*} , Hamad Mohammad Aljubair¹ , Yara Ibrahim Alromaih¹ and Nada Ayed Alayed¹

¹Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, College of Dentistry, King Saud University, 3663 King Saud University. Unit #1, Riyadh 12372-7185, Saudi Arabia

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Bentham Open.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (CC-BY 4.0), a copy of which is available at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>. This license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.



CrossMark

Received: May 06, 2026

Revised: September 08, 2026

Accepted: September 23, 2026

Published: October 08, 2026

*Address correspondence to this author at the Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, College of Dentistry, King Saud University, 3663 King Saud University. Unit #1, Riyadh 12372-7185, Saudi Arabia; Tel: +966114677423; E-mail: malsenani@ksu.edu.sa

Cite as: Alsenani M, Aljubair H, Alromaih Y, Alayed N. Managing Radiation-induced Xerostomia in Head and Neck Cancer: A 2020-2025 Systematic Review. Open Dent J, 2026; 20: e187421064238. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/01187421064238261005080244>



Send Orders for Reprints to reprints@benthamscience.net

PRISMA CHECKLIST

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Title page (1)
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist.	Abstract section Pages (1-2)
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	Section (1) Page (3)
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	Section (1) Page (3)
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	Section (2.1) Pages (4-5)
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	Section (2.1) Pages (3-4)
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	Section (2.1) Page (4)
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Section (2.2) Pages (4-5)
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Section (2.2) Pages (4-5)

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (<i>e.g.</i> for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	Section (2.2) Pages (4-5)
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (<i>e.g.</i> participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	Section (2.2) Page (4)
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Not performed
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (<i>e.g.</i> risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	Not applicable
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (<i>e.g.</i> tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	Section (2.2) Page (4)
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	Not applicable
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	Results presented using tables and narrative synthesis
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	Narrative synthesis conducted due to heterogeneity of included studies
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (<i>e.g.</i> subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	Not performed
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	Not performed
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	Not performed
Certainty assessment	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	Not assessed
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	Section (2.2) Pages (4-5)
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	Section (2.2) Page (5)
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	Tables 1-9
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	Not assessed
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (<i>e.g.</i> confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	Section (3) Tables 1-9
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	Narrative synthesis presented according to intervention categories
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (<i>e.g.</i> confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	Not applicable
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	Not performed
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	Not performed
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	Not assessed
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	Not assessed
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	Section (4) Page (23)
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	Section (4) Page (27)
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	Section (4) Page (27)
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	Section (4) Page (27)
OTHER INFORMATION			
Registration and protocol	24a	Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered.	Not registered
	24b	Indicate where the review protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.	No protocol prepared
	24c	Describe and explain any amendments to information provided at registration or in the protocol.	Not applicable

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	No funding received
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	The authors declare no competing interests
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	No datasets were generated or analyzed; data available within the article

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, *et al.* The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit

DISCLAIMER: Please note that this article is currently in the 'Early view' stage and is not the final 'Version of Record'. While it has been accepted, copy-edited, and formatted, however, it is still undergoing proofreading and corrections by the authors. Therefore, the text may still change before the final publication. Although 'Early view' may not have all bibliographic details available, the DOI and the year of online publication can still be used to cite them. The article title, DOI, publication year, and author(s) should all be included in the citation format. Once the 'Final Version of Record' becomes available the 'Early view' will be replaced by that.