

# The Habit of Qat Chewing: A Causative Factor for Oral Keratosis Lesions

Dr.Ali H. Murad B.D.S.,M.Sc\* .

\*Lecturer. Head of Oral Pathology, College of Dentistry, University of Kufa

## Abstract

Qat leaves are generally placed in the mouth and held between the molars and cheek, for their psychostimulative effect. In Yemen, the habit is widespread as a deep-rooted socio-cultural tradition. However, in recent years, the advent of air transport has facilitated the distribution of fresh Qat to many places. The purpose of this study was to assess the occurrence of oral keratosis in a sample of 185 Yemeni men over 20 years of age, who had chewed Qat more than one year, were studied for the direct frictional effect of the qat on the chewing side and compared with the opposite side that not used for chewing. Oral keratosis was significantly more prevalent in the chewing side (71.89%) specially when the duration of chewing is too long. There was a significant association between the occurrence of oral keratosis and smokers Qat chewers when compared with non-smokers Qat chewers. The majority of the lesions were homogenous and there were no findings suspicious for pre-malignant or malignant changes. This study demonstrated a relationship between Qat chewing and oral keratosis, which attribute to chronic local mechanical and (may be) chemical irritation of the mucosa. However, this study requires further studies including longitudinal clinical inspections, biopsies of the tissue changes of Qat chewers and the effect of chemicals used to increase the production of the Qat.