Response to Letter to the Editor: “Impact of Age on Disease Progression and Microenvironment in Oral Cancer”

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We appreciate the insightful Letter to the Editor by Sharma et al. (2018) regarding our work (Vincent-Chong et al. 2018) examining the impact of aging on oral cancer. We agree with their thoughts on the need to better understand aging-associated changes in metabolism, epigenetics, and microbiota as contributing factors to malignant transformation. To this end, several lines of investigation are under way in our laboratory. We are currently examining aging-associated changes in immune, inflammatory, and epigenetic programs in oral tissues in healthy and diseased hosts. While we did not examine changes in the oral microbiome in our published study, we are actively examining changes in salivary gland biology in aging hosts. And finally, from a nutritional and metabolic standpoint, we are assessing the interaction between diet, oral carcinogenesis, and response to preventive and therapeutic intervention in young and old hosts. Consistent with the thoughts expressed by Sharma et al., it is our anticipation that findings from these ongoing studies will provide further insight into the crosstalk between aging, microbiome, and oral health.

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