

## **Sigmund Freud: smoking habit, oral cancer and euthanasia.**

[Adeyemo WL](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Author information**

1

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Nigeria.

### **Abstract**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychoanalysis had a well-known love of the cigar. The natural progression of this vice was the development of oral cancer for which he underwent a lengthy ordeal. An account is given in this article of Sigmund Freud's illness and care following the diagnosis of his oral cancer. The role of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide is also discussed.

#### **METHODS:**

A review of relevant literature on Sigmund Freud's illness, risk factors for oral cancer and euthanasia was undertaken.

#### **RESULTS:**

Sigmund Freud was a heavy smoker with a 20-cigar/day habit. In 1923, a diagnosis of squamous cell carcinoma of the palate was made, for which he underwent a lengthy ordeal which span a total of 16 years. During this period, he bluntly refused to quit smoking. Freud consulted many specialists (otolaryngologists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, prosthodontists and general surgeons), during the course of his ordeal with oral cancer. He underwent 34 surgical procedures before his eventual death in 1939 through euthanasia.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Continued indulgence in smoking and procrastination on the part of Freud, as well as mediocrity, negligence and incompetence on the part of the first surgeon that operated on Freud, could partly be responsible for his lengthy ordeal.