

Summary

- The classification of salivary gland tumors takes into account their cellular derivation from epithelial, mesenchymal, or lymphoid origins.
- The rarity of some of these tumors, some of which display a wide spectrum of morphological patterns within the same tumor, as well as the existence of hybrid tumors, results in a difficult task of differentiating benign from malignant tumors.
- For the most part, salivary gland tumors exist as benign or malignant neoplasms, with anticipated biologic behavior.
- The pleomorphic adenoma distinguishes itself as a benign tumor that may take on malignant characteristics and behavior.
- Some low-grade salivary gland malignancies represent highly curable neoplasms.
- Gene expression profiles may be used to predict biologic behavior of salivary gland malignancies. This notwithstanding, histologic grading and clinical staging remain the two most important considerations in determining the treatment of these neoplasms and their prognosis.
- Major salivary gland staging occurs according to size, extraparenchymal extension, lymph node involvement, the presence of metastases, and whether the facial nerve is involved, as may occur in parotid tumors.

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