
GUEST EDITORIAL

Healthy periodontium.....Healthy teeth... Good for dental practice

Periodontium forms the backbone of dentistry. Not only the survival of teeth in the mouth is dependent on healthy periodontium but the success of every treatment modality is also dependent on it.

The students of dentistry in today's world may find branches like endodontics/orthodontics to be attractive and lucrative. But the matter of the fact is that treatment in most of the clinical branches of dentistry depends on the status of periodontium.

Why is an endodontist hesitant to restore a tooth or perform root canal treatment on pulp-involved tooth which has on grade II mobility or furcation involvement?

Why is an orthodontist hesitant to apply forces on teeth with inflamed gingiva and compromised (with bone loss) periodontium?

Why is a prosthodontist sceptical in formulating a fixed partial denture when abutment teeth have signs and symptoms of periodontal disease (bone loss and mobility).

Why is an implant placement in periodontally compromised cases at risk?

So, healthy periodontium is not only important for retention and maintaining teeth in optimal health but also for the practice of dentistry. The success and longevity of every treatment done depends on the health of periodontium.

The prevalence of periodontal disease is very high. Although there are not many studies which have been done across India but limited data suggest that prevalence of periodontitis is around 70%. This means that dentists have the burden of treating not only caries, malocclusion, missing teeth and other dental problems faced by population but also the periodontal disease first so that other treatments can be accomplished.

Periodontitis has an intimate relationship with systemic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, preterm low birth weight, respiratory diseases, and cancer. Most of these diseases occur in older age groups. Also, the risk factors associated with periodontal diseases and systemic disease have a lot in common.

Considering the size of population in our country, treating such a huge burden of periodontal disease may not be feasible because of the magnitude of disease prevalence, economic aspects, social issues and availability of dental services in every corner of country.

The burden of periodontal disease should not increase further. People should be able to retain their teeth for longest period of time and that will indirectly help the practice of dentistry. Maintenance of teeth in a health state would require the dentists to use principle of "Prevention is better than cure" and "Early diagnosis – minimal treatment" to make the public aware of the advantages of prevention and early treatment, and in turn the advantages of retaining healthy teeth.

So, for success of the practice of dentistry, we need to successfully diagnose and treat periodontal diseases first...

As the new classification of periodontal diseases proposed in 2017 states that a patient once diagnosed with periodontitis is a periodontitis patient for life; so prevention is always better than cure.

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