

Diabetics Love Your Gums

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Short Communication

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It's been decades since we know that a link exists between diabetes and oral health. Diabetes is a serious public health problem of global importance and poses great economic burden to all the nations. With modern medicine in one of its best stages we have still failed to prevent diabetes altogether. Though it's a modifiable factor but curing it fully is not possible. On the contrary, Periodontitis which is a chronic inflammatory disorder can be prevented and can be cured completely and therefore acts a preventable factor for managing glycemic control via bi-directional relationship [1]. Lot of studies which are heterogeneous in design and protocols has given different results. A common fact remains that irrespective of types of diabetes, periodontal impact remains the same.

Cross sectional studies on Pima Indians, a group displaying the highest prevalence of type II diabetes in the world, show an odds ratio of 2.8 to 3.4 for developing periodontal disease in type 2 diabetics compared to non-diabetics [2]. Similarly, longitudinal studies have shown increased risk of ongoing periodontal destruction in diabetics as compared to non-diabetics with an odds ratio of 4.2. Studies have shown that poorly controlled diabetics respond less successfully to periodontal therapy relative to well-controlled and non-diabetics [3, 4].

Since diabetes is a modifiable factor in the sense that though it cannot be cured, it can be controlled, this itself is a reason that people should take care of their gums [5]. Bleeding from gums is a frequently observed first symptom of gum destruction which people ignore. Halitosis or sweet smelling breath is another early symptom which diabetics ignore. So this is the scenario

which needs to be changed in order to promote the overall health. Dentists do spend the lion's share of their time educating patients on the critical importance of bio film control that is keeping the bacterial load as low as possible will increase the odds for great oral and overall health.

Having written this, there is no new data here. The above mentioned things have already repeatedly been explained through various studies, forums and advertisements. The question now is that inspite of this wide discussion, why it's still not ingrained in peoples mind that treating one disease can control the other one. Measures should be taken to make people accept that a link exists between gum disease & diabetes and that everyone should start loving their gums and keeping them healthy should be on everyone's to-do list.

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