

# DENTAL TRIBUNE

— The World's Dental Newspaper • ASEAN Edition —



**Eating disorders and dentistry: Identifying early signs in the dental office**

**Study analyses tooth survival after root canal therapy in US population**

**Dental sales a mixed bag as war and supply difficulties bog down pandemic recovery**

## **In The Hot Seat**

**An Interview with Desmond Chong, the President of Malaysia Dental Industry Association (MDIA)**

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# EDITOR'S MESSAGE

It's the month of July! We are grateful for your ongoing support for Dental Tribune ASEAN. As we are approaching the middle of the year, we've seen a few major events happening across the globe. On Jun 23, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of monkeypox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern due to the increasing number of cases which exceeds 17,000 in 75 countries.

Consumer Association of Penang (CAP) stated that stern action should be taken against fake dentists and inspections should be done by the authorities at dental clinics every six months. The unhygienic procedure performed by fake dentists is dangerous as many of them claim to have learned their skills from YouTube and such. It's also believed that they acquire the tools needed from hardware stores or suppliers from other countries that are deemed not intended for medical use.

On a side note, do check out our first-ever interview with Desmond Chong, the President of the Malaysia Dental Industry Association where we talked about how MDIA started its journey, milestones, and vision. MDIA also shared their outlook on Malaysia's




Susan Tricia  
Editor

dental industry post-pandemic and matching grant worth RM10 million to develop the medical device industry to encourage investment and export market.

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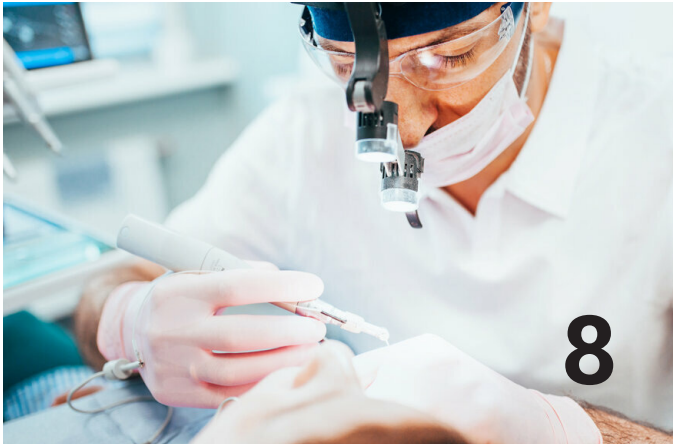
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S W I S S  M A D E



# Eating disorders and dentistry:

## Identifying early signs in the dental office

By Iveta Ramonaite, Dental Tribune International



*According to the Oral Health Foundation, dental teams can play a crucial role in identifying and acting on early signs of eating disorders. (Image: Paradise studio/Shutterstock)*

According to some eating disorder organisations and charities, between 1.25 and 3.40 million people in the UK are affected by an eating disorder. The condition can have a tremendous effect not only on a person's mental health and body image but also on his or her oral health, and a patient's mouth can thus serve as a major indicator of disordered eating. In this regard, the Oral Health Foundation has recently highlighted the role of dentists, dental hygienists, dental therapists and dental nurses in recognising the warning signs and symptoms of eating disorders.

According to various studies, eating disorders are among the deadliest mental illnesses. In the UK, around 275,000 people have binge eating disorder, 235,000 bulimia and 100,000 anorexia. Purging through vomiting often leads to enamel erosion, whereas binge eating may increase the risk of dental caries and tooth loss caused by excessive sugar consumption. Additionally, people with eating disorders often absorb insufficient vitamins and other nutrients, and malnourishment too can be reflected in the mouth. Other dental problems related to eating disorders include sensitive teeth, dry mouth, halitosis and enlarged salivary glands.

### Dentists have an important role

In light of the National Smile Month campaign aimed at championing the importance of having good oral health, the Oral Health Foundation has recently stated that dental professionals are well placed to identify eating disorders early during regular dental check-ups.

Brooke Sharp, a clinical advice coordinator at Beat, an eating disorder charity based in the UK, stated that eating disorders often go undetected for a long time, since it is difficult to identify the disorder by just looking at a person. However, since there are physical indicators of an eating disorder that are visible in the mouth, she believes that dentists may be among the first to observe these.

As noted by Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation Dr Nigel Carter, OBE, it is already the case that dental professionals examine the hard and soft tissue of the mouth and look for signs of tooth erosion during routine dental examinations. They also have the opportunity to spot possible injuries to the mouth from the insertion of foreign objects to cause the person to vomit.

**“The UK needs a far better strategy for diagnosing eating disorders early”  
— Dr Nigel Carter, Oral Health Foundation**

Commenting on the issue, Dr Carter said in a press release: “The UK needs a far better strategy for diagnosing eating disorders early. The sooner an eating disorder is suspected or recognised, then the more effective treatment will be.”

Sharp stated that the charity is already taking action to provide dental professionals with the necessary tools for recognising eating disorders and advising patients on the next steps: “At Beat, we are currently working on a webinar series to educate different health sectors about health, which includes dentists, dieticians, and pharmacists. The aim of this training will be to help professionals identify the signs of an eating disorder and understand how to support their patients.”

However, she noted that, although dental teams may encounter patients with eating disorders, it is not their responsibility to treat the condition. Instead, they should direct patients to professional help: “Whilst it's important to increase awareness of eating disorders, it is never the role of dentists to diagnose or treat the eating disorder, and patients must always be signposted to specialist support,” she concluded.

# Study indicates denture wearers may be more at risk of nutritional deficiencies

By Anisha Hall Hoppe, Dental Tribune International



*A retrospective longitudinal study conducted by the Regenstrief Institute and the Indiana University School of Dentistry indicates that full or even partial denture wearers might be at risk of nutritional deficiencies. (Image: Shutterstock/Krakenimages.com)*

Although prosthodontic treatment is the primary means of helping either completely or partially edentulous patients, nutritional counselling too might be warranted for patients who have received dentures, according to a recent retrospective longitudinal study by Regenstrief Institute in Indianapolis and the Indiana University School of Dentistry.

The study linked laboratory values of nutritional biomarkers with dental records. The laboratory tests included complete blood count, basic metabolic profile, and lipid and thyroid panel tests. The research team compared the nutritional state of 3,519 study subjects who had received removable partial or complete conventional or implant- or abutment-retained dentures with the nutritional state of 6,962 members of a control group who had not received or required prosthodontic intervention. In addition to age and sex, the authors considered other factors available in the electronic records, including race, treatment history, and insurance status. The study used records spanning from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2018 of patients who had been treated at Indiana University School of Dentistry clinics, and nutritional markers over the course of two years were compared.

Noticeable findings included significant decreases in serum albumin, creatinine and blood urea nitrogen (BUN) in completely edentulous patients after they had received their dentures and an increased estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) in the same group. Those who had dentures also had decreased serum albumin, protein and serum calcium compared with controls. For partially edentulous patients, there was a decrease in thyroid-stimulating hormone, BUN and total

cholesterol. Records for patients who were edentulous in either the maxillary or mandibular arch indicated decreased BUN and eGFR as well.

The authors suggested that lowered levels of serum albumin in denture wearers could have a connection to older patients having problems with chewing and swallowing and in patients who already struggle with chronic inflammation and malnutrition. Generally, serum albumin and prealbumin decrease only in patients who experience severe malnutrition, and the study authors recommended further studies to explore the connection between albumin levels and prosthodontic intervention.

Senior author Dr Thankam Thyvalikakath, a research scientist at Regenstrief Institute and director of the dental informatics core at the Indiana University School of Dentistry, shared her perspective in a press release. She said: “Dentures are a significant change for a person. They do not provide the same chewing efficiency, which may alter eating habits. Dentists need to be aware of this and provide advice or a referral for nutrition counselling. These patients need support during the transition and possible continued monitoring.”

The study authors concluded that serological testing could help with monitoring the health and nutritional state of denture wearers and that patients should be offered nutritional counselling when receiving their prosthodontic treatment.

Although serum albumin, calcium, protein and creatinine decreased in denture wearers, the mean values of haematological markers remained within normal ranges, excluding triglyceride, low-density lipoprotein and total cholesterol. Weight and body mass index were above the normal range. The study authors noted that the latter values indicated overweight patients in both the control and study groups and were consistent with the local population in Indiana.

The risk of undernutrition is not a new consideration, but the use of electronic records enabled a much more feasible approach to evaluating the health and progress of a larger selection of patients.

*The study, titled “Nutritional assessment of denture wearers using matched electronic dental-health record data”, was published online in the Journal of Prosthodontics on 23 March 2022, ahead of inclusion in an issue.*





A new US study has found that the overall median survival time for teeth after undergoing root canal therapy is 11.1 years.  
(Image: VanoVasaio/Shutterstock)

# Study analyses tooth survival after root canal therapy in US population

By Brendan Day, Dental Tribune International

Though there have been many studies on the survival rate of endodontically treated teeth, only a relatively small proportion of these have analysed these outcomes outside of an academic clinical setting. Using data from a large group of general dental practices across the US, researchers have been able to glean a deeper insight into just how long teeth tend to survive after undergoing root canal therapy and predictors of that survival time.

The study was conducted by a team led by Dr Thankam Thyvalikakath, a research scientist at Regenstrief Institute and director of the dental informatics core at the Indiana University School of Dentistry, both in Indianapolis. The team used de-identified data of 46,702 patients who had received root canal therapy from members of the National Dental Practice-Based Research Network, a consortium of dental practices and organisations throughout the US. According to the researchers, this study is the first of its kind in the US to analyse such records from patients at community dental practices.

Analysis of the data found that the overall median survival time for teeth after undergoing root canal therapy was 11.1 years and that 26% survived for more than 20 years. The researchers also demonstrated that these survival times differed depending on

follow-up treatments and other factors. Teeth that received root canal therapy along with a subsequent filling and crown had a median survival time of 20.1 years, whereas those that received no additional restorative work after the therapy survived for an average of just 6.5 years.

Another significant predictor of tooth survival time after root canal therapy was the presence of dental insurance at any point during dental care. In a press release, Dr Thyvalikakath noted that these findings could “inform dental insurance coverage by demonstrating the value of crowns and permanent restoration options”.

“Oral health is a public health issue that significantly affects people’s overall health. Leveraging dental records can help us better understand ways to improve treatment, identify causal relationships and maintain the health of teeth and gums,” she added.

*The study, titled “Root canal treatment survival analysis in National Dental PBRN practices”, was published online in the Journal of Dental Research on 12 May 2022, ahead of inclusion in an issue.*





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