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EuroPerio9 press release

Depression and stress associated with severe gum disease

Periodontists should evaluate psychosocial status of patients

Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS. 21 June 2018 – A study presented today (1) at EuroPerio9, the world’s leading congress in periodontology and implant dentistry, found that psychosocial factors such as depression, stress, emotional vulnerability and Type A personality are associated with more severe periodontal injuries, indicating the need for psychological evaluation and support for patients presenting with aggressive or chronic periodontitis (gum disease).

Previous studies (2-4) suggesting a link between periodontitis and psychosocial factors presented very mixed results, making it difficult to identify the interaction between specific psychological characteristics and severe gum disease.

Lead author Dr Sébastien Jungo, DDS, Department of Periodontology at Paris Descartes University, said: “Our aim was to explore the association between clinical variables in patients suffering from aggressive (AP) or chronic periodontitis (CP) and some psychological traits, especially depression, stress, Type A Behaviour Pattern (TABP) and Locus of Control (LOC). We hoped to identify patients at risk for more severe periodontal disease.”

The study included 79 patients with periodontitis who attended the Periodontology Clinic of the Descartes University Hospital in Paris, France. “Our patients completed some short questionnaires to help us determine certain psychological traits. They also underwent periodontal examinations where we measured probing pocket depth (PPD) and clinical attachment loss (CAL),” explained Dr Jungo.

Commenting on the results, Dr Jungo said: “After controlling for age, tobacco consumption and the form of periodontitis, we found that a clinical attachment loss of over 5 mm was associated with ‘emotional vulnerability’ for all patients, and with stress and Type A personality in patients presenting aggressive periodontitis.”

Regarding the possible causes for the association between severe periodontal injuries and psychological traits, Dr Jungo said that more research was needed: “This is a small study but it is representative of what periodontists see in their clinics. In the future there is a need for wider interventional studies, as well as research into inflammatory markers in addition to psychological assessment.”

“At this stage we can say that the psychological evaluation of patients presenting with particularly aggressive periodontal disease is important. For patients presenting Type A personality, depression,

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perceived stress or emotional vulnerability, the oral healthcare team should recommend psychosocial support,” concluded Dr Jungo.

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Notes to Editors

Type A behaviour pattern: Describes people that are more competitive, highly organized, ambitious, impatient, highly aware of time management and/or aggressive. Cardiologists who developed this theory came to believe that Type A personalities had a greater chance of developing health problems such as coronary artery disease (Wikipedia).

Locus of control: In personality psychology, locus of control is the degree to which people believe that they have control over the outcome of events in their lives, as opposed to external forces beyond their control. The concept was developed by Julian Rotter in 1954, and has since become an aspect of personality studies (Wikipedia).

Emotional vulnerability: People who are emotionally vulnerable tend to experience emotions much more intensely than others and take longer to return to feeling emotionally stable once they are upset. Some people are born with more emotional vulnerability while others can become more emotionally vulnerable due to a number of environmental factors such as trauma, stress, or chaotic family environments. Emotional vulnerability can be found at the core of many psychological and social problems. <https://www.genuinedbt.com/problems-targeted/emotional-vulnerability/>

Gum disease (periodontitis): is a common condition in which the gums and deeper periodontal structures become inflamed. This inflammation of the gums, which usually takes the form of redness, swelling and a tendency to bleed during tooth brushing, is the body’s response to certain bacteria that have been allowed to accumulate on the teeth (EFP website).

Aggressive periodontitis: a rare type of gum disease. It can be localised or generalised. It usually begins in childhood or early adulthood and affects only a small number of people. It tends to affect families and causes rapid progression of bone and tooth loss if untreated (Mayo Clinic Website).

Chronic periodontitis: the most common type of gum disease, affecting mostly adults, though children can be affected too. This type is caused by plaque build-up and involves slow deterioration that may improve and get worse over time but causes destruction in the gums and bone and loss of teeth if not treated (Mayo Clinic Website).

References:

1. EuroPerio9 Abstract [O024](#), Type A behaviour pattern, stress and emotional vulnerability are associated with more severe aggressive periodontal diseases. To be presented at the session on Psychosocial factors on Thursday 21 June 2018 at 16:30
2. Perruzzo, Daiane et al. 2007, [A Systematic Review of Stress and Psychological Factors as Possible Risk Factors for Periodontal Disease](#). Journal of periodontology. 78. 1491-504. 10.1902/jop.2007.060371.
3. McCracken, G. 2009. [Positive relationship between stress and periodontal disease? Nature summary review](#)
4. Araújo, Milena et al. Association between depression and periodontitis: a systematic review and meta-analysis. First published: 6 January 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpe.12510>



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[About the EFP](#)

The European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) is an umbrella organisation of 30 national scientific societies devoted to promoting research, education and awareness of periodontal science and practice. It represents more than 14,000 periodontists and gum-health professionals from Europe, northern Africa, and the Middle East.

[About EuroPerio9](#)

EuroPerio is the world's biggest scientific meeting devoted to periodontology. The most recent of these triennial meetings, EuroPerio8, took place in London in June 2015 and brought together almost 10,000 people. EuroPerio9 will take place from 20 to 23 June 2018 at the [RAI](#), Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

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