

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EuroPerio10 congress**

**Tongue and lip piercings may damage teeth and gums**

**Copenhagen, 16 June 2022**. Oral piercings should be removed to save teeth and gums, urged dental professionals displaying an e-poster at EuroPerio10, the world’s leading congress in periodontology and implant dentistry organised by the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) (1).

“Our study found that many people with oral piercings had deep pockets and gaps around their teeth, and receding and bleeding gums,” said study author Professor Clemens Walter of University Medicine Greifswald, Germany. “These are all signs of periodontitis, also called gum disease, which can lead to tooth loss. People with tongue and lip piercings should remove them to protect their teeth and gums from further damage.”

It is estimated that approximately 5% of young adults have oral piercings with the tongue being the most common site (2). Women are around four times more likely to have an oral piercing than men.

This systematic review collected the best available evidence on piercings and oral health. The analysis included eight studies with 408 participants who had a total of 236 lip piercings and 236 tongue piercings. Every fifth patient had piercings in more than one oral site. Wearing duration varied from one month to 19 years and most jewellery was metal.

The studies compared teeth and gums next to the piercing with teeth and gums elsewhere in the mouth. Regarding tongue piercings, three in five studies found deeper pockets around teeth next to the piercing while three in four studies observed wider gaps. All four studies that examined patients for receding gums found this problem in those with tongue piercings while two in three studies found bleeding gums. As for lip piercings, the main finding was receding gums, which was observed in three out of four studies.

Professor Walter said: “The findings suggest that oral piercings, especially in the tongue, negatively affect the adjacent teeth and gums. In those with tongue piercings, damage was particularly notable around the bottom two front teeth, called the mandibular incisors, which are important for biting and chewing food. The likelihood of tooth and gum damage appeared to increase with the duration of wearing a lip or tongue piercing.”

He concluded: “Dentists should inform their patients about the risk of periodontal complications when wearing oral piercings, and people with these piercings should be strongly encouraged to remove them.”

**EFP, global benchmark in periodontology**

The European Federation of Periodontology (EFP, [ww.efp.org](http://ww.efp.org)) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting awareness of periodontal science and the importance of gum health. Its guiding vision is “periodontal health for a better life.”

Founded in 1991, the EFP is a federation of 37 national periodontal member societies that represents more than 16,000 periodontists, dentists, researchers, and oral-health professionals from Europe and around the world. It supports evidence-based science in periodontal and oral health, and it promotes events and campaigns aimed at both professionals and the public.

The EFP organises EuroPerio, the world’s leading congress in periodontology and implant dentistry, as well as other important professional and expert events such as Perio Master Clinic and Perio Workshop. The annual Gum Health Day on May 12, organised by the EFP and its member societies, brings key messages on gum health to millions of people across the world.

The EFP also organises workshops and outreach campaigns with its partners: projects to date have covered the relationship between periodontal disease and diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and caries, as well as women’s oral health during pregnancy.

The EFP’s *Journal of Clinical Periodontology* is the most authoritative scientific publication in this field. The federation also publishes *JCP Digest*, a monthly digest of research, and the *Perio Insight* magazine, which features experts' views and debates.

The EFP’s work in education is also highly significant, notably its accreditation programme for postgraduate education in periodontology and implant dentistry.

The EFP has no professional or commercial agenda.

**References**

1) The abstract “Influence of oral piercings on periodontal health – a systematic review” was presented during the session “Influence of oral piercings on periodontal health – a systematic review” by Prof Clemens Walter which took place on 15 June at EuroPerio10.

2) Hennequin-Hoenderdos NL, Slot DE, Van der Weijden GA. The prevalence of oral and peri-oral piercings in young adults: a systematic review. *Int J Dent Hyg*. 2012;10:223–228.

**ENDS**

**Notes for editors**

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