Proving effective oral instructions in a clinical setting

Despite advances in good oral health care, many patients and dental professionals remain uncertain about oral physiopathology and the concept of disruption of interdental biofilm. Although patients may have bought more oral care products and become more interested in their dental hygiene, many still do not know how to use them correctly. A previous article published in Dental Tribune Asia-Pacific 11/2016 introduced the outstanding research done by Prof. Denis Bourgeois, Dean of the University of Lyon’s dental faculty in France. In his presentation at the FDI Annual World Dental Congress in Poznań in Poland, he presented scientific evidence that interdental brushes, in particular CURAPROX CPS interdental brushes, are efficient tools to interrupt the interdental biofilm. However, questions remain about the level of individual training that the dental staff should provide for their patients.

Naturally, dental professionals agree that, despite clinical evidence that supports the importance of interdental biofilm management, effective daily cleaning of interdental spaces remains a challenge among their patients. Removal of interproximal plaque is considered important for the maintenance of gingival health, prevention of periodontal diseases and the prevention of caries, as well as the prevention of systemic diseases. However, dentistry still argues whether today’s interdental cleaning tools are sufficient to interrupt biofilm development. Professionals debate on which tools to use and how to use them correctly, as uncertainty has remained about how to maintain clean interdental spaces.

As Bourgeois concluded in his presentation, the majority of studies have reported a positive significant difference in the plaque index when using an interdental brush compared with floss. In general, interdental brushes were found to be more effective in removing plaque compared with brushing alone or the combined use of toothbrushing and dental floss. Patient ability and motivation. “Interdental cleaning does not readily become an established part of daily oral hygiene,” said Bourgeois throughout his presentation. Damages and regular training can reduce the risk of bleeding and oral bacteria,” said Bourgeois. “From a clinical point of view, the oral prophylactic goal of achieving thorough cleaning with minimal damage, due to the misuse of interdental brushes, is important. It is necessary to emphasise individual instruction and selection of oral hygiene means of cleanliness with little or no harm to either soft or hard tissue.”

Oral prophylaxis should therefore be taught individually and not in lectures. By correcting and repeating the right cleaning technique, prevention of oral and systemic disease can be achieved. Currently, Bourgeois offers prophylaxis training courses for dental students. In these, they are taught the correct use of oral hygiene tools such as interdental brushes, cleaning techniques, and the importance of motivation and repetition. As observed by the course presenter, 95 per cent of the dental students continue to use interdental brushes after two years of completing the training. “Interdental cleaning needs to become an established part of daily oral hygiene for the reduction of interproximal plaque, the control of gingival inflammation and improvement of patient motivation. If you use a toothbrush twice a day, you have to use interdental brushes once a day. If not, you will risk your health,” Bourgeois said.

According to Prof. Denis Bourgeois, toothbrushing alone is not enough to prevent interdental plaque. Individually trained oral prophylaxis is key to success. Establishing the accessibility and widths of the interdental spaces should therefore be part of the routine examination of all patients. Its goal is to identify the distribution of interdental brush accessibility by site and to choose the largest diameter that can pass between the teeth without causing discomfort or trauma. An interdental brush that is sized correctly for each interdental space is easy to handle and atraumatic, yet effective.

Individual instruction important for good interdental health

One major problem with interdental cleaning has always been diseases that are not only due to sugar consumption or heredity, but result from a lack of proper dental hygiene.

The reason for oral and periodontal diseases is not a lack of anti-septics, a lack of fluoride or a lack of massage of the gingiva. Antiseptics continue to be used, but most wash does not stop bleeding. Only the right technique of cleaning interdentally, repetition of this technique and clinical point of view, the oral prophylactic goal of achieving thorough cleaning with minimal damage, due to the misuse of interdental brushes, is important. It is necessary to emphasise individual instruction and selection of oral hygiene means of cleanliness with little or no harm to either soft or hard tissue.”

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A probe as key to successful interdental cleaning

As an effective and predictable in-clinic professional procedure that influences acceptability, comfort and patient compliance, a colorimetric interdental probe can be considered as a newly developed in-clinic professional procedure that will make interdental cleaning easier and more predictable and help improve patient motivation.

By measuring the interproximal space correctly, Bourgeois and his colleagues suggested that the use of a colorimetric probe and interdental brushes is more beneficial to both the patient and the practitioner than merely choosing interdental brushes based on the reference technique of trial and error alone. By using the IAP CURAPROX colorimetric probe, a clinical professional instrument with a rounded tip, dental professionals were able to measure the interdental space and choose the most suitable interdental brush for their patients. The study found that the brushes chosen had a diameter larger than that indicated by the probe in 25.54 per cent of cases and a diameter smaller than the probe value in 35 per cent of cases. According to the study, the colorimetric interdental probe can be considered as a newly developed in-clinic professional procedure that will make interdental cleaning easier and more predictable and help improve patient motivation.

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