

Psychological And Social Effects Of Tooth Loss (Research Article)

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SUMMARY

A beautiful smile is a window to society and an important factor for a healthy life. It also creates a positive self-image for the personality. Tooth loss is a very traumatic and distressing experience psychologically. This situation is accepted as a serious event that creates important psychological problems in human life. Patients experience both physical and emotional deprivation following the loss of one or more teeth, which reduces their quality of life.

The aim of this study was to investigate the patient's desire, necessity and awareness for the restoration of missing teeth. In the study, a questionnaire including questions about the physical, emotional and aesthetic effects of edentulism was applied to 200 patients of both sexes. The collected data were interpreted together with their reasons.

In our analysis, there were physical and emotional complaints related to missing teeth in most of our patients. However, those with missing teeth in the anterior region showed higher psychological and social disability scores, while those with missing teeth in the posterior region showed higher physical complaints and functional deficit scores.

As a result, anterior tooth loss has a far-reaching impact on both emotional and overall dental health. Anterior tooth restoration should be given priority when planning treatment. Therefore, when evaluating the restoration of missing teeth during the examination, the position of these missing teeth in the mouth should also be taken into account.

Key Words: Tooth loss, edentulous psychology, and dental aesthetics.

INTRODUCTION

A beautiful smile plays an important role in maintaining one's self-image (Roessler, 2003, 340-5). Tooth loss is also a sad event that is considered psychologically traumatic and difficult to adapt (Omar, 2003, 515-20), (Fiske, 1998, 90-3).

Loss of one or more teeth is a condition that significantly reduces the quality of life of patients and affects them physically, socially and emotionally (Slade, 1994, 358-64), (Craddock, 2009, 616-9). For this reason, while tooth deficiencies have been tried to be restored with removable prostheses in the past, they have recently been tried to be treated with dental implants due to the increasing need for aesthetic and functional comfort (6-8) (Kayser, 1981, 457-62), (Witter, 1989, 27-33) , (Arise, 1993, 41-9).

Quality of life is an important and multidimensional parameter that encompasses physical health, psychology and social interactions. It should be considered when evaluating the current situation and treatment in dental patients (Sischo, 2011, 1264-70).

In the past, many patients felt that they saw tooth loss to some extent inevitable and were to some extent prepared for it. Today, the expectations of patients have changed and most of them see tooth loss as a very negative event. Studies have also shown that patients' lack of anterior teeth is more important and prioritized than posterior teeth. For this reason, patients want their anterior teeth to be restored earlier according to the lack of posterior teeth (Elias, 1998, 649-661), (Steele, 1998, 598-603).

Few people have studied the psychological effects of partial tooth loss, but in an emotional study of total tooth loss, 45% of patients had difficulty accepting this condition and were experiencing loss of self-confidence. They also couldn't accept the change in their face shape. In general, the psychological effects described in general; loss of self-confidence, limitation of food choice, decreased enjoyment of food, avoidance of laughing in public and reluctance to establish close relationships (Davis, 2001, 53-57). Clinicians should consider all these when formulating treatment during the examination.

METHOD

A questionnaire including questions about the physical, emotional and aesthetic effects of edentulism was administered to 200 patients equally from both sexes. The patients were selected from individuals over 18 years of age and with at least one missing tooth, excluding third molars. The patients were informed about the study and their consent was obtained. During the examination, special time was allocated to this subject and the opportunity to express their thoughts with the patients was given. The topics evaluated in the survey are as follows:

- Difficulty to Chew
- Difficulty to Speak
- Feeling Neglected
- Less Flavor in Food
- Avoiding Eating in Public
- Avoiding Laughing in Public
- Work Concentration Disorder

The data obtained were evaluated and interpreted.

RESULTS

A population of 200 patients participated in this study, 50% male and 50% female. The youngest of the participants was 20, the oldest was 68, and the mean age was 53. The prevalence of missing teeth was generally equal in both sexes. However, as the age increased, the number of missing teeth also increased (58% between 20-40 years old, 82% between 40-68%).

The prevalence of missing teeth was generally equal in both sexes. However, as the age increased, the number of missing teeth also increased (58% between 20-40 years old, 82% between 40-68%). While psychological and social findings related to aesthetics were more pronounced in women (86%), there were more deficiencies in chewing in men (82%).

The majority of the patients included in the study wanted to replace their missing tooth, and the main reason for this was functional and social anxiety. As a result of the evaluation, although Difficulty in Chewing is stated to be high among the reasons (92%), Difficulty to speak (68%), Feeling Neglected (58%), Less Flavor in Food (72%), Avoiding Eating in Public (82%), Community Complaints such as Avoidance of Laughing (89%) and Work Concentration Disorder (56%) also indicate that social deficiencies are quite high.

DISCUSSION

In the developing and industrializing world, the average life expectancy and the elderly are increasing rapidly. Oral health problems and edentulism are important in this elderly group (Trulsson, 2002, 417-424). In 45% of edentulous individuals, a decrease in self-confidence and an inability to accept the changes in the face due to lack of teeth are observed (Larsson, 1996, 163-190). Edentulism also includes feelings of shame and guilt due to poor oral and dental health history (Fiske, 1989, 90-93).

It is important to have an attractive and beautiful appearance. According to Ernulf, beautiful and slender individuals have great chances in both private and professional life (Ernulf, 1995).

Research has shown that appearance is important (Newcomb, 1956, 575-586), (Newcomb, 1961). While it is stated in a study that attractiveness and beauty are important only for young people, it is also stated that it is important to look beautiful and pleasant for the elderly, and it is also stated that elderly patients demand fixed and beautiful teeth to compensate for the decreased physical functionality and attractiveness (Trulsson, 2002).

Replacing missing teeth is an individual's subjective need. This need is due to both aesthetic and functional factors. Therefore, it is important in which region the missing tooth is located (Osterberg, 1984:29-48).

While female patients are concerned with both the aesthetic and functional problems of edentulism, men are mainly concerned with the chewing function. Men are either only aware of the chewing function of the teeth, or their aesthetic and phonetic preferences come after functional needs (Priyanka, 2019, 673-676). In the review study of Elias and Sheiham, it is stated that patients primarily want the restoration of a missing anterior tooth (Elias, 1998, 649-661).

According to a Dental Health Survey conducted in England, a significant portion of patients want to have a new tooth replaced. Although this request is more likely in the anterior teeth, it is also seen in the posterior teeth (Steele, 2000, 598-603).

In our study, those with missing teeth in the anterior region showed higher psychological and social disability scores, while those with missing

teeth in the posterior region showed higher rates of physical complaints and functional deficits.

As a result, anterior tooth loss has a far-reaching impact on both emotional and overall dental health. Anterior tooth restoration should be given priority when planning treatment. Therefore, when evaluating the restoration of missing teeth during the examination, the position of these missing teeth in the mouth should also be taken into account.

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