

Guest editorial

Malocclusion and life quality

Even more, clinical studies aim to relate life quality to the health of the subject. Measurements for this purpose are of more importance from the moment the researchers understand that traditional studies have little relevance to patients. To evaluate any intervention in health area, including in oral health, measurements which are important for the patients by reflecting their perceptions, as well as measurements which are informative for the clinicians are necessary. Therefore, subjective indicators have become an important tool, enabling to evaluate the impact of oral diseases on the life quality of the patients [6].

Traditionally, the determination of the need for orthodontic treatment is performed based on normative measurements which do not consider either the expectations or perceptions of the patients regarding to which accounted for making them search for treatment [2, 7]. These measurements do not inform, for example, how much the malocclusion would negatively affect the patients' life on daily basis considering the functional limitations and psychosocial well-being. For this purpose, how is the life quality of the patients seeking for treatment because of the presence of malocclusion instead of the presence of the malocclusion itself should be diagnosed; however, the latter has been routinely measured with excellence. The use of socio-dental indicators which measure the life quality in Orthodontics enable to evaluate the impact of the malocclusion and consequently its aesthetic, functional and social alterations will generate on the patient's routine, because for the same type of malocclusion there are different psychosocial impacts. This means that a given malocclusion may be perceived in different manners by people [2, 7, 8]. It is believed that this individual perception is the trigger for searching orthodontic treatment, related or unrelated to the problem severity [1, 3, 9].

Orthodontics is especially the area of Dentistry in which the use of socio-dental indicators is most recommended because orthodontic treatment generates a profound psychological and social influence on patients at all phases of the treatment [7].

In this context, it is important to understand the biopsychosocial aspects of the malocclusion and its repercussion on the life quality of teenager patients because adolescence is a specific phase of the human development characterized by several changes and anatomical, physiological, psychological and social transformations. Information, in this sense, may favor a better evaluation of the need and priority of treatment as well as enable a better planning of the resources required to access the orthodontic treatment of this population [4, 5, 7].

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