

Concerns about maintenance of natural teeth and dental implants

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Periodontal disease is still prevalent according to the recent report from US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (doi: 10.1177/0022034512457373). Nearly a half of adults aged 30 years and older have this disease and its prevalence rate increases with age, given that the two-thirds of adults 65 years and older have periodontal disease, which does not surprise us.

When our patients' natural teeth have poor or hopeless prognosis, the best recommendation that we can offer as dentists is the usage of dental implant to replace the teeth, which is mostly welcomed by some patients who are not financially limited. However, other conventional prosthetic solutions, such as crown & bridge and removable partial or full denture often result in unhygienic gum condition or improper masticatory function, which makes it too hard for most patients to keep their gums and underlying bone healthy.

On the other hand, dental implant does not decay and is easy to clean compared to the traditional dental prosthesis. Theoretically, patients' peri-implant tissues are more likely to remain healthy. Dental implant is capable of replacing each individual tooth as well as multiple teeth in a row. For edentate patients, dental implant can effectively anchor a full or partial denture. With these numerous advantages, it is obvious that dental implant is now regarded as the treatment of choice for most patients who suffer from unhealthy periodontal condition.

We should keep in mind, however, that there is very little consensus on how to define peri-implant inflammation. Although the prevalence rate of peri-implantitis is inconsistent, its overall trend shows an increase over a period of time. This phenomenon might have resulted from the durability of dental implant, which is said to be lifetime as opposed to the approximately ten-year durability of conventional prosthesis. As dental implant can last far longer with gum tissue, the healthy status of gum should be a crucial factor for successful dental implantation. Therefore, periodontal treatment must be regarded as equally important as peri-implant therapy.

In this issue of JPIS, we have carefully selected papers that present us ensuring periodontal or peri-implant health. The sincere effort of these authors and careful attention of readers would be a cornerstone in the foundation of foremost periodontal & implant science.

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