

Education and motivation in oral health — preventing disease and promoting health in patients undergoing orthodontic treatment

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Abstract

Introduction: It is incumbent upon dentists to prevent disease, minimize risks and promote health. Patients also need to be made aware of their role in oral health care. Patients undergoing orthodontic treatment find it particularly difficult to maintain satisfactory oral hygiene owing to the presence of bands, wires and ligatures. It is therefore crucial to establish preventive motivation and guidance methods to ensure mechanical control of dental plaque. **Objectives:** This study investigated the effects of educational, preventive and motivational actions on the oral health of patients undergoing fixed orthodontic treatment. **Methods:** Participants received free toothpaste and toothbrushes throughout the study and instructions on oral hygiene were provided and reinforced throughout the six months of research. Physical examination was performed at baseline and after 6, 12 and 24 weeks for verification of plaque, gingival and bleeding indices. **Results:** Initially, the oral hygiene of participants was inadequate. During the study, significant improvement in oral health occurred in all indices. Preventive, educational and motivational actions undertaken in this study were statistically effective in improving the oral health of orthodontic patients. **Conclusion:** Health promotion and disease prevention should be part and parcel of the care provided by orthodontists directly to their patients whereas oral health care guidance and motivation should be provided before and during treatment.

Keywords: Prevention. Education. Motivation. Orthodontics. Oral health.

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