

Oral Medicine / Lecture #17

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Orofacial pain:

This is a very important topic in dentistry.

Pain: is an unpleasant sensory or emotional experience that has a potential or actual tissue damage.

Pain is like anger, happiness and sadness, it's an experience.

Pain is considered as a **fifth vital sign** and it's also considered as a symptom of a disease.

One of the major sources for chronic pain is the **head and neck lesions** and it is related to facial pain more than dental pain

Human's neck is composed of seven vertebrae same goes for giraffes'.

The orofacial region has a high incidence of having a lesion because it has a lot of tissues and if any of them are involved then it will lead to orofacial pain, **Orofacial region contain variable structures:**

- Muscles
- Blood Vessels
- Nerves
- Lymph nodes
- Sinuses
- Teeth
- Salivary glands
- Mucosal tissues

Characteristics of orofacial pain:

1- High degree of prevalence (very common), 20% in USA

2- Takes time to be diagnosed; because unlike other types of pain it can't be visualized, it is related to neck lesions which have many structures and the diagnosis is made upon the patient's own words which are not accurate.

3- This pain has a high intensity.

Causes of orofacial pain:

1- Local factors:

- Teeth
- Sinuses
- Salivary glands diseases
- Mucosal ulcerations
- Ear pain (otitis media)

2- Vascular factors:

- Temporal arthritis
- Migraine
- Titching headache
- Cluster headache

3- Neurological factors:

- Trigeminal neuralgia
- Glossopharyngeal neuralgia
- Neuroma
- Post herpetic neuralgia

4- Psychogenic factors: (the hardest to treat)

- Burning mouth syndrome
- Atypical facial pain
- TMJ dysfunction

5- Radiating factors:

- Angina that radiates pain to the neck and the left side of the ramus of the mandible.

IT IS VERY RARE FOR CANCER TO CAUSE CHRONIC FACIAL PAIN.

You ,as a dentist, have to differentiate between facial and dental originated pain.

History of pain:

Site, onset, character, repeating, radiation, aggravating factors, relieving factors, treatment, intensity of pain and any associated factors.

Examination:

- 1- Check the local structures.
- 2- Systemic examination and history taking.
- 3- Examination of cranial nerves and sometimes we need psychogenic assessment.
- 4- Pain mapping and pain questionnaire that will help us in diagnosis.
- 5- Sensory map; a map that is used in physiology that categorizes organs upon its sensory importance.

THE FACIAL AREA TAKES THIRD OF THIS MAP AND THAT EXPLAINS THE INCREASED INTENSITY OF PAIN AND THE INCREASE OF THE PREVELANCE OF SUCH PAIN.

- 6- Dental investigations (percussion test, palpation test, cold test and radiographs).
- 7- Further investigations that are not related to dental examination such as; MRI, CT, temporal artery biopsy, chest X-Rays, ESR, blood tests and psychogenic assessment.