

Emerging research targets the correlation between oral health and heart disease

Introduction

Clinicians and patients alike benefit from assessing oral health risk factors. As clinicians invest in best practices in assessing oral health, they should also consider investment in diagnostic instruments that provide the most reliable clinical assessments. For over 100 years Hu-Friedy has partnered with clinicians to do just that. Invest for greater returns.

Global Impact

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the number one cause of death for both men and women globally. This disease is the number one killer of men and women-claiming more victims than all forms of cancer and AIDS combined.¹ By 2030, almost 23.6 million people will die from a CVD. The largest percentage increase will occur in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The largest increase in number of deaths will occur in the South-East Asia Region.² Periodontal disease, a chronic inflammatory disease that destroys bone and gum tissues that support the teeth, is one of the two major dental diseases that affect human populations worldwide at high prevalence rates.³

The Connection

Numerous research studies over the past two decades have shown a connection between heart disease and the key bacteria in periodontal disease, *porphyromonas gingivalis*. This oral bacteria has two finger-like appendages that attach to and invade the cells that line the interior surface of the human aorta.⁴

While the study of the precise link between the two diseases is ongoing, recent emphasis has been placed on the role of inflammation - the body's reaction to fight off infection, guard against injury or shield against irritation. While inflammation initially intends to have a protective effect, untreated chronic inflammation can lead to dysfunction of the affected tissues, and therefore to more severe health complications such as cardiovascular disease.

"Inflammation is a major risk factor for heart disease, and periodontal disease may increase the inflammation level throughout the body," says Kenneth Kornman, DDS, PhD, and Editor of the Journal of Periodontology.⁵

Dr. Kornman's research on the connection between oral health and heart health is among many other studies that propose periodontal treatment may reduce cardiovascular disease. A statement released from the American Academy of Periodontology supports the idea that knowing the risk factors and possible links to coronary heart disease is the first step towards preventing it.⁶ This approach to overall health can only benefit patients in the long run, as some insurance company studies find fewer medical care needs in patients who maintain their periodontal health.⁷

The First Step to Accurate Clinical Outcomes for Better Oral Health

The first step toward maintaining oral health is the use of high quality products designed to provide the most accurate and reliable clinical outcomes. Hu-Friedy supports clinician's efforts in assessing oral health risk factors. Products like Hu-Friedy's **Colorvue® probes** which feature vivid yellow tips & black markings provide increased intraoral visibility for faster and more accurate assessments. Clinicians can engage patients during the examination because the bright, vivid probe colors enable the patient to see problems at a glance. Hu-Friedy's **Duraspond™ explorers** are constructed of a proprietary special alloy blend which provides explorers with flexibility, strength and resilience resulting in precise diagnostic procedures. Talk to your customers about investing in quality diagnostic instruments for the greatest returns.

1 http://www.adha.org/media/facts/total_health.htm

2 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs317/en/index.html>

3 http://www.who.int/oral_health/publications/jop2005_76_12_2187.pdf

4 <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/Research/ResearchResults/ScienceBriefs/Archive/SIB2006/May/SIB05182006.htm>

5 http://www.perio.org/consumer/perio_cardio.htm

6 <http://www.perio.org/consumer/nejm-perio-cardio.htm>

7 http://jada.ada.org/cgi/content/full/137/suppl_2/14S

