Challenges with TMD Therapy from a General Dentist’s Perspective

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Main Points

• Interprofessional Relationships in Rural Communities
• Denture Patients and TMD
• Confusion of “TMD” Definition
• Underutilization of DC/TMD
Interprofessional Relationships in a Rural Community

Misdiagnosis

• “My doctor told me I have TMJ and to get a mouthguard.”
• “I get migraines all the time. The nurse practitioner gave me Topamax, but it doesn’t really do anything. Then, my doctor told me to take a Maxalt that he prescribed, but when should I take it?”

Lack of Respect from Medical Community

• Failure to support dental diagnosis
• Misunderstanding of fee structures and medical insurance coverage
• Licensure and Prescription Authority
Interprofessional Relationship Challenges: Case Examples

• 26-year-old patient with myalgia and chronic migraines without aura who has history of stroke: Nurse practitioner failed to respect request for medical support with low dose SNRI or TCA; NP recommended OTC soft mouthguard as alternative treatment because “dentists charge too much for bite splints.” MD supported the NP during phone consultation

• 32-year-old patient with TMJ pain and headaches referred by another dentist: Patient checked with her medical insurance first who told her to go to an ENT; ENT told patient he could treat her appropriately with ear surgery.
Denture Patients and TMD

- Correlation of headaches and TMD rarely correlated with poor denture fit and function in practice and in literature.
- Complete dentures rarely evaluated by physicians; denture patients do not receive regular dental examinations.
- Case Examples:
  1. Fractured condyle missed by ER MD
  2. Myalgia caused by poor occlusion
Confusion of “TMD” Definition

• “TMD is not caused by occlusion!”
• Temporomandibular disorders (TMD) include 30+ diagnoses
  • Bony
  • Cartilaginous
  • Muscular

“TMD” is not a diagnosis!
Underutilization of DC/TMD

• Continuing Education Centers (Spear, Pankey, Kois, etc.)

• ADA ???

• Accessibility and Awareness of DC/TMD Examination Protocol