



The TMJ Association, Ltd.

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Yes, TMD is a Complex Disease

Thanks to Joan Wilentz, The TMJ Association's editor for this summary.

A recent article that appeared in *Current Rheumatology Reviews* by a Spanish and a Scandinavian author* underscores the complexity of temporomandibular disorders (TMD). The authors note that these painful conditions have been discussed for over 70 years without reaching consensus on either their causes or treatment. As a service to the research field they have reviewed the most recent studies for which there is valid scientific evidence relating to the epidemiology, symptoms, diagnosis, pathophysiology, management of myofascial TMD, and making suggestions for future research.

"Myofascial" refers to the fibrous tissue that sheathes the chewing muscles and other tissues associated with the TM joint. It is the more common form of TMD, as opposed to conditions confined to the joint itself, such as disc displacement.

The investigators conclude that TMD represents a complex and multifaceted pain disorder that may involve genetics, nervous system peripheral or central sensitization, and a range of psychological, behavioral and other variables. Most importantly, they emphasize that proper management of patients with myofascial TMD must be multimodal, including health care professionals besides dentists. Also, "Proper therapeutic interventions should see things from a personalized patient's point of view," they say, "including active listening, empathy, and addressing psycho-social issues," adding that "Patient-centered care involves shared decision making with mutual respect between clinicians and individuals."

Included in the management section of the paper is a table evaluating a range of treatment options, such as manual and physical therapies, psychological approaches, acupuncture and orthodontics, rating the strength or weakness of evidence for their effectiveness. While the article is lengthy and not written for the general reader, we believe that it will help those who live with TMD or care for a TMD patient in validating that the pain is real, that it is associated with a multitude of risk factors, that symptoms can vary and that patients deserve treatment that takes into consideration their unique set of clinical findings and history.

* [Fernandez-de-Las-Penas C1, Svensson P., Myofascial Temporomandibular Disorder. Curr Rheumatol Rev. 2016;12\(1\):40-54.](#)

How Accurate Are Dental Websites When It Comes to TMD?

We thank Karen Raphael, Ph.D., New York University College of Dentistry for providing us with this written summary.

In an eye-opening article to be published shortly in the journal *Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology and Oral Radiology*, authors Desai, Alkandari, and Laskin address the critical issue of the accuracy of information published on dental websites about the cause and treatment of temporomandibular disorders (TMJ/TMD).

In their review of over 250 dental practice websites sampled throughout the U.S., the authors found that nearly two-thirds represented general dentists who nevertheless advertised themselves as "TMD specialists." Even more frustrating was that the information posted on these websites was often incorrect. Regular readers of *TMJ News Bites* and the TMJA website undoubtedly know that so-called TMD or TMJ problems consist of a complex set of genetic and biopsychosocially mediated causes, but many websites referred to these problems as if they were a single disorder with a single cause. Over two-thirds of the websites referred to 'bad bite,' 'malocclusion' or similar terms, implying that occlusal problems were the cause of TMD. This ignores a long-standing body of research rejecting old theories of occlusion; that is, a belief that the way that the upper and lower teeth meet when biting down causes TMJ problems. More than half of the websites recommended treating the so-called occlusal problem to relieve TMD symptoms. In point of fact, such treatments are not supported by research, and have been strongly condemned by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. These findings emphasize the danger posed to patients by trying to learn about TMJ or any health condition by relying on website information posted by practitioners. In light of trends found in this new article, the research-informed information provided by The TMJ Association becomes more than essential in order to fight web-based marketing ploys filled with outdated and blatantly wrong information about the cause and appropriate, safe care of TMJ problems.

* [Desai B, Alkandari N, Laskin DM, How Accurate Is Information About Diagnosis and Management Of Temporomandibular Disorders On Dentist Websites?, Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology and Oral Radiology \(2016\), doi: 10.1016/j.oooo.2016.04.014.](#)

How Does a Parent's Chronic Pain Affect Children?

"Parenting is a tough job. It's hard enough when things are going well - imagine trying to parent while experiencing chronic pain. One mother with chronic pain, Sarah Erdreich, described her experiences with parenting her two-year-old daughter in a recent Slate article [1]. She described her worries about how her pain might affect her daughter, and

the difficulties she faces in her daily life ("I can't dress her by myself, or tie her shoes... But all that feels like mere window dressing for what I really can't do: feel at all confident that I can take care of my child alone for more than an hour"). Others have published children's books to help children understand and cope with their parents' chronic pain (e.g., *Why Does Mommy Hurt?* by Elizabeth M. Christy [2]). Understanding how children are affected by a parent's chronic pain is clearly an important issue that many people are concerned about. What does the research say about this topic?" [Read more.](#)

Meet Sophi

Although we are based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin we are often contacted by patients from all over the world. We'd like to share a recent touching email we received from Sophi of Kenya. She wrote:



"Hi dear madam, I'm Sophi, a TMJ patient. I fell when I was around 5 years old back in my town. I never got any treatment except for 7 stitches on the wound on my chin, pain killers and I was put on liquid foods. After sometime, I recovered from the pain, but my face was crooked.

Growing up with a crooked face was really tough, especially when people said mean things and it affected my self-esteem because I got bullied a lot. I then got braces which made it worse and my teeth are not aligned. It really hurts me when I do a Google search and see that people with TMD look normal compared to my face. My right side is bigger, my eyebrow and eye are higher than the other side, one side of my nose is bigger, and my chin has moved to the right side. I cry every day because I can't be treated where I live and I can't afford to go abroad. I even have wisdom teeth growing but they can't be removed because I can't open my mouth wide enough. I'm always at home in a small room. I never go out, nor do I have friends. I'm even scared of other people so I don't make eye contact. I feel like people are just staring at my horrible face. Please help me. I have no one to support me. All I want is to feel normal and for my face to look normal. Looking forward to your reply."

The TMJ Association reached out to the International & American Associations for Dental Research and was able provide Sophi with some guidance for finding help in Kenya.

Scientists Figure Out How NSAIDs Can Harm the Heart

"Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, are effective pain relievers. They include a lot of over-the-counter drugs that are probably in your medicine chest - products like aspirin, Advil, Aleve, Motrin, and Nuprin. But if you are at risk for heart disease, your physician may have advised you not to take these drugs on a regular basis. Research has found evidence these drugs can increase cardiovascular risks." [Read more.](#)

MedWatcher Mobile App

MedWatcher is a mobile application (app) for smart phones or tablets that makes it easier and faster for patients, caregivers and health care professionals to submit voluntary reports of serious medical device problems to the FDA, rather than using postal mail, telephone or online reporting.

The MedWatcher app allows users to upload photographs of medical devices, which can help identify visible problems with the device, such as breakage or corrosion. App users can also choose to automatically receive MedWatch Safety alerts, FDA safety communications, recall information, relevant articles and other information on specific medical products of interest.

Note: MedWatcher is not intended to fulfill [mandatory reporting requirements](#) for manufacturers and facilities.

The FDA relies on reports of serious problems with medical devices and other products as one important way to identify and better understand the risks associated with these products. Receiving higher quality reports more quickly helps the FDA identify and respond to safety alerts and public health emergencies more efficiently and effectively. These reports, along with data from other sources, can provide critical information that can lead to improved patient safety.

The FDA encourages healthcare professionals, patients and caregivers to report the following types of problems, even when they are not certain that the device caused the problem:

- Serious adverse events that might be associated with a medical device, especially events that are not listed in the product labeling. "Serious" means medically significant events, hospitalizations, and fatalities.
- Therapeutic failures where the device failed to work as it should.
- Use errors with devices, including situations where the error may have been due to poor communication, or to ambiguities in product names, directions for use, or packaging.
- Product quality issues, such as suspected counterfeit products, defective components, potential contamination, device malfunctions and poor packaging.

Download the MedWatcher Mobile App:

- [iTunes Store: MedWatcher App Download](#)
- [Google Play Store: MedWatcher App Download](#)

NIH Funding Opportunities

Basic and Clinical Research

In an effort to promote greater understanding of TMD and to develop safe and effective evidence-based diagnostics and treatments, The TMJ Association promotes and encourages basic and clinical research on Temporomandibular Disorders. [We invite you to view a listing of the latest National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) funding opportunities for scientists interested in advancing TMJ research.](#)

The following is the newest NIH funding announcement:

Notice of National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) Participation in [PA-16-164](#) "Administrative Supplements for Research on Sleep Disturbances and Impact on Chronic Pain (Admin Supp)" ([NOT-NS-16-020](#))

Young Investigators Urged to Apply for USBJI Career Development and Grant Mentoring Program

The United States Bone and Joint Initiative (USBJI) and Bone and Joint Canada are dedicated to increasing research on musculoskeletal diseases. The USBJI has developed a grant mentoring program to provide early-career investigators an opportunity to work with experienced researchers in the field to assist them in securing funding and other survival skills required for pursuing an academic career.

This program is open to promising junior faculty, senior fellows or post-doctoral researchers nominated by their department or division chairs. It is also open to senior fellows or residents that are doing research and have a faculty appointment in place or confirmed. Basic and clinical investigators, without or with training awards (including K awards) are invited to apply. Investigators selected to take part in the program attend two workshops, 12-18 months apart, and work with faculty between workshops to develop their grant applications. The next workshop is scheduled to take place **November 4-6, 2016 in Toronto, Ontario**. The unique aspect of this program is the opportunity for attendees to maintain a relationship with a mentor until their application is funded.

Deadline to apply for the Fall 2016 Workshop is July 15, 2016. To apply for this program, please go to their website, www.usbji.org/programs/yii/call-for-applications.

TMD Nutritional Guide

TMD Nutrition and You

TMD Nutrition and You, was specifically developed to help those with compromised oral function maintain a diet of good nutrition despite their oral disability, and also provides guidance on making dental appointments as comfortable as possible. [Click here to download a free copy of our booklet.](#)

Research E-Newsletter

Cutting Edge - COPCs Research Advances

Cutting Edge - COPCs Research Advances, is a new electronic newsletter published by the Chronic Pain Research Alliance, an initiative of The TMJ Association.

Developed to keep the medical-scientific community abreast of recent research advances, this publication contains abstracts of recently published studies on the epidemiology, pathophysiology and clinical management of Chronic Overlapping Pain Conditions. These conditions include **temporomandibular disorders**, chronic low back pain, chronic migraine and tension-type headache, endometriosis, myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, vulvodynia, irritable bowel syndrome and interstitial cystitis/painful bladder syndrome.



The January and March issues are now available for your review at:

http://www.cpralliance.org/New_Findings. If you would like to receive future issues of *COPCs Research Advances*, [click here to register](#).

Educational Brochure on TMD

A Resource Guide for Temporomandibular Disorders

This brochure is a straightforward, easy-to-read booklet that guides patients in how to make health care decisions. It is available [by mail](#) or as a [PDF on our website](#) and we encourage you to share it with your friends, health care professionals and family members.

Dental Care Guide

Temporomandibular Disorders, Dental Care and You

The TMJ Association developed this guide to provide you with oral hygiene self-care tips that you can do at home, as well as suggestions for future dental appointments. Routine maintenance of your teeth and gums should reduce the risk of dental disease and the need for invasive dental treatments. [Click here to view on our website](#).

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[Coupons.Com](https://www.coupons.com)

Support The TMJ Association by using Coupons.com's 1-800-Flowers coupons, Barnes & Noble coupons, Target coupons or any of the thousands of coupon codes available for your favorite online retailers.

Support Our Work

The TMJ Association (TMJA) is the only patient advocacy organization fighting for the best science that will lead to a greater understanding of Temporomandibular and related disorders, as well as safe and effective treatments. We cannot change the face of TMJ without YOU.

[Click HERE to make a tax-deductible online contribution today!](#)

"My daughter lost some of her childhood to TMD. She went undiagnosed for so long. The doctors judged her and us. It seems that most doctors don't understand how debilitating this syndrome can be. They need to be educated. This contribution is in honor of our little girl who had no voice." - Michelle, New York

"The TMJA is a great organization. I am impressed by your objectivity and transparency. Thank you for your hard work." - Lisa, Pennsylvania



About The TMJ Association

Changing the Face of TMJ

The TMJ Association, Ltd. is a nonprofit, patient advocacy organization whose mission is to improve the quality of health care and lives of everyone affected by Temporomandibular Disorders (TMD). For over 25 years we have shared reliable information on TMD with people like you. We invite you to visit our website, www.tmj.org.

- If you're not currently receiving *TMJ News Bites* and would like to be on our mailing list, [sign up here](#).
- [Past issues of *TMJ News Bites*](#) are also available on our website.

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