

Maintenance of good oral health is a cost-effective measure for decreasing risk of heart disease. Do you agree with me?

Sir,

Porphyromonas spp., including *P gingivalis* and *P endodontalis*, are gram-negative anaerobic pigmented bacteria that have been isolated from patients with different oral diseases.^[1] They are among the more than 400 bacteria that may infect the mouth. Bad oral hygiene may lead to periodontal diseases, which has been postulated to lead to damage to the heart.^[2] Recent research has shown that having a healthy heart depends not only on good dietary practices, a stress-free life, and regular exercise, but also on the maintenance of good oral hygiene. Infection with pathogenic bacteria, in particular gram-negative anaerobic bacteria such as *Porphyromonas* spp. and *Prevotella* spp. (*P intermedia* and *P nigrescens*) increases the risk of future heart disease.^[3] Other gram-negative bacteria such as *Fusobacterium* spp. are also probably involved.

In this letter, I would like to call attention to these findings and ask if there really is a strong link between heart disease and oral infection. If there is, the public must be educated to consider brushing of teeth and regular dental check-up as essential not just for maintenance of oral hygiene but also for prevention of heart disease. Different studies have shown that these can be considered cost-effective interventions for decreasing the risk of heart disease.^[4,5]

To conclude, reduction in the incidence of heart diseases in the world may be indirectly linked to improvements in personal hygiene, particularly oral hygiene, among the public, and this must not be forgotten by clinicians and the healthcare system.

Ali M Tavana
Health Research Management Center, Baqiyatallah (A.S),
University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.
E-mail: alimehrabitavana@yahoo.com

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