

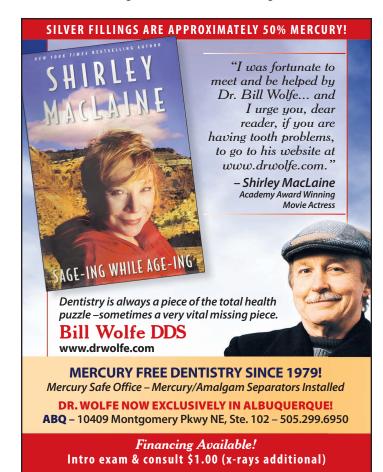
An Integrative Approach to Health Care

by Bill Wolfe DDS

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healthcare practitioners, our main goal is our patient's well-being. In an integrative healthcare model, all practitioners need to learn to work together for a common goal. Dental professionals need to educate themselves about different treatments and diagnoses that relate to the body as a whole. Medical practitioners need to educate themselves about oral conditions and diseases that affect the overall health of their patients.

The oral cavity has the highest bacteria count of any area of the body. There have been numerous research studies showing how gum disease and bacteria in the mouth are associated with potential heart attacks, strokes, premature births, diabetes, etc. Also, there are issues of mercury (silver fillings), nickel crowns, biocompatibility of dental materials, electrogalvanism/dissimilar metals, dead teeth, bite imbalances, chronic jaw infections, etc., and their potential effects on the entire body. In addition, the major organ acupuncture meridians flow through the oral cavity and the teeth can affect organs at a distance, through their effects on



these associated meridian/energy pathways. Therefore, the health of our mouth is crucial to our overall health. As the body is all one piece, the oral cavity, teeth, and the dental materials within are vastly overlooked and *important components in the systemic health puzzle*. However, even though dentistry may be a huge, missing piece, the dentist cannot entirely eliminate the health effects of these issues alone, as an integrative approach to needs to be utilized, involving other health practitioners, in order to restore the body to its highest health.

The effects of dead, toxic teeth retained in the mouth, plus the toxic materials used in the mouth can create systemic toxicity in distant parts of the body that would not be apparent to a dentist or physician not versed in such information. An example of how a physician and dentist would work together would be the following scenario: A patient has a heavy metal (urine) test done at a physician's office. The results indicate high levels of lead, mercury, arsenic, and uranium, etc. Since it has been known and quantified through clinical testing for decades that mercury vapor is continually released from silver amalgam fillings (see a portion of OSHA letter below), it is vital that the mercury fillings be replaced.

"Although there would be no difference between mercury vapor measured inside the mouth and outside the mouth, the exposure potential of intra-oral mercury would be much greater than that of extra-oral mercury vapor, as mercury is toxic through the routes of absorption and ingestion, as well as by inhalation."—U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, letter to me dated Nov. 26, 1986.

The patient is then referred to a mercury-free dentist for safe removal of the fillings at the request of the patient and referring physician. After completion of the mercury filling removal, the patient can now be pronounced as "mercury free" in their mouth, but certainly not be systemically mercury free, as the mercury has been vaporizing from the fillings for years. Now the systemic detoxification continues under medical supervision. In addition, since teeth affect organs and structures at a distance through the oral acupuncture meridian system, certain meridians associated to the treated teeth may require stimulation and balancing by an acupuncturist.

Another example of integrative health care involving dentistry concerns dead, toxic teeth and high bacterial counts associated with periodontal (gum and bone disease). This pathologic condition is characterized by symptoms ranging from swelling and bleeding of the gum tissue, receding gums, bone loss and loose teeth. This disease process is present in approximately 85% of the population. While periodontal disease is thought of as an older person's affliction, as many as one-half of high school students have some form of gingivitis. Any degenerative condition in the mouth is a potential energetic disruption of the associated energy meridian and the bacteria can migrate throughout the body leading to higher instances of the following medical conditions:

Heart Attack and Stroke: Patients with periodontal disease are twice as likely to suffer a fatal heart attack and nearly three times as likely to suffer a stroke as those without periodontal

Other Infections: Patients with artificial heart valves and joints are at increased risk of suffering a serious infection when periodontal bacteria enter the bloodstream. In patients with artificial heart valves, the infection can be fatal unless promptly and aggressively treated with antibiotics.

Headaches and "TMJ" issues are major problems that can severely affect people's quality of life, yet are routinely overlooked by dentists and physicians. Approximately 40 percent of all healthy individuals suffer from chronic headaches, and one out of eight people suffer from headaches so severe that

disease. This association with heart disease is especially evident in patients *under* 50.

Bacterial Infection and Diabetes: It has been well established that diabetes predisposes patients to bacterial infections, including those affecting the oral cavity. Recent studies provide strong indications that periodontal disease can make diabetes worse, as diabetics with severe periodontal disease have greater difficulty maintaining normal blood-sugar levels. researchers Dental now recommend that periodontal inflammation be treated and eliminated in all diabetic patients in order

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JOINTS	Shoulder Elbow		Shoulder Elbow Hand Foot Big toe		Jaw Hip Anterior knee		Posterior knee			Posterior knee		Jaw		Shoulder		Shoulder Elbow		
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to a common cause of chronic pain: TMJ Syndrome. TMJ stands for temporomandibular joint. This is the joint in the jaw that allows the jaw to open, close, move backward and forward, and from side to side. The term "TMJ Syndrome" refers to a malpositioning respective of the structures and iaw associated muscles. This condition results in muscle contractions, which are a factor in approximately 80 percent of all tensionrelated headaches. 75 million Some Americans are affected by TMJ Syndrome, but only about 5% of all TMJ patients are actually diagnosed

they cannot function

normally. Often, these

problems are related

Chart developed by Dr. voll and Dr. Kramer 19:

to significantly reduce the risk of injury to the retina and arteries. Such treatment also often leads to a reduced need for insulin.

Pneumonia and Other Respiratory Diseases: Pneumonia occurs when bacteria dwelling in the oral cavity and throat are inhaled into the lungs where immune system defenses fail to fight them. Some bacteria that cause pneumonia thrive in infected oral tissues of patients with periodontal disease.

Premature Birth: There is increasing evidence that infections in the mouth have a direct link to inducing premature labor. In one study, researchers found that mothers of prematurely born babies were seven times more likely to have advanced periodontal disease as mothers whose babies were born at normal weight. correctly and treated for their problem.

Those medical doctors, chiropractic physicians, and bodyworkers that recognize the presence of a TMJ imbalance are of great assistance in the effectiveness of their own patient treatment when they refer to a dentist that is experienced in the management of head, neck and facial pain. Working together to keep the jaw in the balanced muscular position while the spine, sacrum, etc. are adjusted has resulted in life changing outcomes.

With an expanded scope of the benefits of integrative care, the patient is the recipient of a healthcare team dedicated to increasing their health and wellbeing, in a more effective way than could be provided individually.

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