Research suggests women of fertile age should take care of oral health in order to avoid delayed conception. (Photo/Provided by Solis Images/Shutterstock)

Periodontal issues may conflict with conception

By Dental Tribune International

In a new study recently carried out by researchers at the University of Helsinki, it was found that the common periodontal pathogen Porphyromonas gingivalis may inhibit conception in young women. According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, severe chronic periodontitis is the sixth most common medical condition in the world. Until now, no data on the influence of periodontal bacteria on conception has been available.

The study investigated whether microbiological and serological markers of periodontitis are associated with conception and involved 256 women aged between 19 and 42 who had stopped contraception in order to become pregnant.

The participants were initially interviewed on their medical history, smoking habits, oral hygiene habits, previous dental visits and socioeconomic status.

Oral examinations established the presence of carious lesions and periodontal disease (based on pocket depth, visible plaque, bleeding on probing and clinical periodontal attachment loss). In order to detect periodontal pathogens and the associated antibodies, the researchers analysed collected serum and stimulated saliva.

The study found that the common periodontal pathogen Porphyromonas gingivalis may inhibit conception in young women.

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vaginal swabs were taken. Participants were followed for 12 months to see whether they had become pregnant.

According to the results, P. gingivalis in the saliva was significantly more common among those who did not conceive than among those who did (8.3 percent compared with 2.1 percent). Levels of salivary and serum antibodies against the pathogen were also significantly higher in the women who did not become pregnant. Furthermore, statistical analysis showed the finding was independent of other risk factors contributing to conception, such as age, socio-economic status, previous deliveries or clinical periodontal disease.

“Our study does not answer the question on possible reasons for infertility but it shows that periodontal bacteria may have a systemic effect even in lower amounts, and even before clear clinical signs of gum disease can be seen,” said periodontist and lead author Dr. Susanna Paju.

The study group was fairly homogenous regarding socio-economic status and general health. However, study limitations included a lack of information on the exact discontinuation date of contraception, the length of use of any birth control methods and whether delayed conception was attributable to the participants or to their spouses.

The study, titled “Porphyromonas gingivalis may interfere with conception in women”, was published online in June in the Journal of Oral Microbiology.


A small sample of the main podium presentations include:

- Michael Pikos, DDS, AFAID, DABO/ID, “The Use of rhBMP-2 for Alveolar Ridge Augmentation”
- Jaime Locada, DMD, FAAID, DABO/ID, and Brian J. Goodacre, DDS, “Digital Planning in Implant Dentistry: From Treatment Planning to 3-D Planning”
- Paulo Malo, DDS, PhD, “Recent Advancements in Graftless Solutions, Zygomatic and Tilted Implants”
- Georgeos Romanos, DDS, PhD, “Implant Dentistry for Compromised Clinical Cases Without Bone Grafting”
- O. Hilt Tatum, DDS, FAAID, DABO/ID, “Predictable Restoration of Alveolar Bone”

More than 1,000 implant dentistry professionals are expected to travel from around the world to learn from the top experts in implant dentistry, as well as from each other, for the 5-day program. A full day of presentations by clinicians from a dozen different countries will comprise the Leonard Linkow Memorial Global Symposium taking place on Friday, Oct. 13.

More than three dozen limited attendance seminars and hands-on workshops will supplement 20 hours of main podium presentations. A team program will include eight different presenters during two days. AAID will also broadcast a live surgery with simultaneous commentary from the surgeon, giving attendees the opportunity to ask questions during the procedure.

More information about the AAID 2017 Annual Educational Conference can be found online at www.aaid.com. Registration for the annual conference is open and those who register by Sept. 12 save $100 on the full registration fee for dentists. For more information, call the AAID at (312) 335-1550.

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