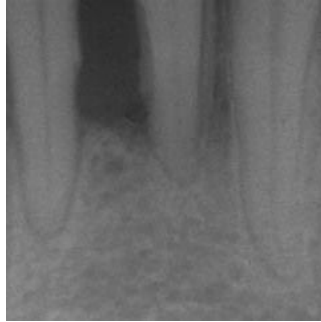


Missing Teeth Predict Cardiovascular Events



A recent study shows that tooth loss is associated with future cardiovascular events, diabetes and death. The research is published in the Journal of Dental Research. The study was conducted by University of Helsinki in collaboration with the National Institute for Health and Welfare.

Cardiovascular disease and diabetes are the leading cause of death worldwide and are known to be associated with periodontitis. Periodontitis is the primary cause of tooth loss in the middle-aged and elderly. The goal of this research was to study whether an evaluation of missing teeth could help predict incident cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and death.

8446 subjects between 25 to 75 years of age filled a comprehensive questionnaire for the National FINRISK 1997 Study. The number of missing teeth was recorded at baseline and information on disease events and deaths was obtained in a 13 year follow-up. Cardiovascular disease events included coronary heart disease events, acute myocardial infarction and stroke.

The analysis showed that the risk for coronary heart disease events and myocardial infarctions by 140 percent if more than five teeth were missing. There was a 51 percent increase in risk for cardiovascular disease, 31 percent increase in risk of diabetes and 37 percent risk in death when more than nine teeth were missing. No association with stroke was observed during the analysis.

According to researcher John Liljestrand, the number of missing teeth could be a useful indicator for general medical practitioners.

The findings show that even a few missing teeth may indicate an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes or all-cause mortality. The analysis took traditional risk factors into account but found that the additional information about missing teeth improved the risk determination of death.

Source: University of Helsinki

Image Credit: Wikimedia Commons

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