

## Orthodontic Awareness

**Himija Karia\***

Senior Lecturer, Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, Vidya Shikshan Prasarak Mandal's Dental College, Nagpur, India

**\*Corresponding Author:** Himija Karia, Senior Lecturer, Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, Vidya Shikshan Prasarak Mandal's Dental College, Nagpur, India.

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Orthodontics is one of the oldest specialties of dentistry dealing with the alignment of teeth. Over the past 100 years, orthodontics has come to affect changes in the alignment of teeth, position of jaws as well as the soft tissue drape of the face [1]. However there are several myths related to the specialty of Orthodontics. It is imperative that the public as well as the dental practitioners are made aware of the scope and limitations of orthodontics.

Orthodontists cannot only move teeth to ideal locations to improve the smile; they can also correct skeletal malocclusions by functional jaw orthopedics. Skeletal malocclusion and asymmetries can be corrected by an Orthodontist during the growing age. Orthodontists also play an important role in surgical correction of severe skeletal malocclusions [2].

The scope of orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics has widened to encompass management of several syndromes, congenital abnormalities like cleft lip and palate [3], Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder [4], TMJ ankylosis [5] as well as obstructive sleep apnea [6].

Now a days several adult patients are opting for orthodontic treatment. This may be attributed to the increased paying capability of these patients and also the need to have a more pleasing smile [7]. In this era of social media, patients are more conscious about their smile and looks which has led to the availability of invisible orthodontic appliances. Ceramic braces, lingual orthodontic appliance and clear aligners are commonly used now to provide patients with more esthetic treatment options.

One of the major concerns regarding orthodontic treatment is the long treatment time. However rapid orthodontics is now a reality. The orthodontic treatment time can be drastically reduced by use of wilckodontics and other methods to enhance tooth movement [8].

Although orthodontic treatment is quite popular among teenagers, there is a lot of confusion regarding the correct time to start orthodontic treatment. The age old adage of "prevention is better than cure" holds true for orthodontic treatment as well, hence it is advised that the first orthodontic consultation must be done when the child is around 7 years of age. It is possible to prevent or intercept malocclusions if the child presents at an early age.

It is also the duty of the medical practitioners, pediatricians and family dentists to refer patients to orthodontists for timely care and treatment.

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