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FCATORS INFUENCING REPLASE FOLLOWING ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT.A SCOPING REVIEW.

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Abstract

Orthodontic treatment results are prone to relapse over time, which is the unfavorable change in position of teeth to its original position before orthodontic treatment. Retention is an important part of almost every case of orthodontic treatment. There are many contributing factors to the incidence of a relapse. This article aims to explain the incidence and prevention of relapse after orthodontic treatment through reviewing literature published during 2000 to 2024 which discusses topics that are appropriate and related to relapse and retention. Sources were taken from textbooks, journals and websites that can be accessed through Google Scholar and PubMed databases. A total of 30 references were found, and 9 articles were included in the integrative review after further analysis. This article concludes that relapse is a common occurrence after orthodontic treatment because of gingival and periodontal factors, occlusal factors, soft tissue factors, hard tissue factors, and growth factors, and its prevention requires the use of retainers, either removable or fixed, depending on the case.

Keywords- Relapse, orthodontics, Retention,

Introduction

A significant challenge in orthodontic treatment plans is maintaining teeth in their corrected ultimate positions upon completion of treatment [1]. In 1934, Oppenheim stated: “Preserving the outcomes achieved post-orthodontic treatment is one of the most challenging facets of the entire process: retention is the most formidable issue in orthodontics, indeed, it is the problem!” [2]. Nearly all individuals undergoing orthodontic treatment require retention to stabilize outcomes and maintain dental alignment. In the absence of retention, teeth are prone to revert to their initial position, a phenomenon known as relapse [3]. Orthodontists must effectively evaluate various techniques and determine the most suitable option for each patient to minimize relapse[4]. Relapse

after orthodontic treatment has been defined by British Standards Institute as the return of corrected teeth to their original position before treatment. However, a more patient-relevant definition of relapse refers to any change in the final position of the teeth at the end of treatment. Post-treatment tooth movement may involve the teeth returning to their pre treatment position or shifting in any direction due to dentofacial growth that is unrelated to orthodontic treatment. Both relapse and tooth movement during orthodontic treatment occur through the same biological mechanisms, which involve increased osteoclast activity and apoptosis on the side of the tooth that is moving, as well as alveolar bone growth. Relapse can occur as a result of forces generated by interdental fibers and dentogingival fibers within the periodontal tissue. These tissues function to keep the teeth in place, so when there is tooth movement, the fibers tend to pull the teeth back to their pre treatment position. Additionally, relapse can also occur if there is deflection in occlusal contact due to suboptimal final occlusion [5]. Stability and relapse after orthodontic treatment are unpredictable. Relapse can occur rapidly on day 1 to day 24 after removal of the orthodontic appliance. The loss of pressure when the orthodontic appliance is removed will cause the teeth to start moving back to their original position [6]. The high rate of relapse is largely due to the difficulty in identifying which patients will have stable tooth positions (not requiring retention) and which will have unstable tooth positions (requiring retention), as well as the extent of potential tooth movement after treatment on an individual basis. As a result, all patients are considered to have the potential for relapse, and post-orthodontic retention is recommended to control the factors that drive relapse [7]. Retention is the process carried out on an individual after the active phase of treatment, with the aim of keeping the teeth in their new position. This is because the tissues in the oral cavity need time to adapt and maintain their strength and position after undergoing changes [8]. The issue of "retention and relapse" is a complex concept because it involves etiological factors, and not all tissues react similarly at the same time. Therefore, the operator must carefully consider all potential related concepts. Retention is regarded as a crucial aspect of orthodontic treatment to maintain the stability of the treatment outcomes [9]. The implementation of the retention phase should begin with an accurate and logical diagnosis based on parameters such as growth, development, craniofacial clinical conditions, duration of use, ideal function, and pre-treatment conditions, as well as etiology. The goal is to achieve a stable, healthy, functional, and aesthetic occlusion that will last throughout the patient’s lifetime. Therefore, the duration of retention use and the type of retention employed may vary for each individual. Common discomforts experienced by individuals using retainers include difficulty swallowing liquids, difficulty speaking, irritation of the soft tissues, particularly the tongue, and excessive saliva. A long-term study on post-treatment tooth movement with fixed appliances stated that 10 years after the retainer was discontinued, 70% of patients required repeat orthodontic treatment due to worsening post treatment tooth position over the following decades [10]. Therefore, this review aims to evaluate the presence, causes and prevention of relapse after orthodontic treatment.

METHOD

This writing was based on references obtained from textbooks, journals and websites that can be accessed through Google Scholar and PubMed databases. The references referred to were selected based on inclusion criteria and analysis of relevant references, research, descriptives, and also literature studies from 2000 to 2024 published in English and discusses topics that are appropriate and related to the literature review. Any literature found meeting the exclusion criteria was eliminated. The exclusion criteria includes literature that were published before 2000 and data that did not have any relevance with the occurrence of relapse after orthodontic treatment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 30 references were found. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, there were 15 articles selected and 15 articles excluded. After going through the analysis process, 9 articles were included in the review.

Etiology of Relapse

Identifying the exact causes of tooth movement after orthodontic treatment is challenging. However, four factors have been proposed as potential reasons for relapse: gingival and periodontal factors, occlusal factors, soft tissue factors, hard tissue factors, and growth factors [11].

Gingival and Periodontal

Factors Periodontal tissue functions to maintain the teeth in their normal position. Therefore, when there is movement, the collagen fibers in the periodontal tissue tend to pull the teeth back to their original position. To prevent this from happening, the periodontal tissue must be given time to adjust to the new position of the teeth [11]. The mechanism of tooth movement through orthodontic treatment occurs when the pressure from the orthodontic appliance acts on the tooth crown and is transmitted through the tooth root to the alveolar bone and periodontal ligament [12]. The alveolar bone surface that receives pressure undergoes resorption, while the opposite side undergoes tension or apposition to maintain stability according to the physiological movement of the tooth, causing tooth movement. This process is known as remodeling [11]. Alveolar bone remodeling is crucial because it is the process of maintaining the balance of the tooth-supporting tissue [11]. As the tooth moves, the transseptal and supracrestal fibers stretch to follow the new tooth position. However, these tissues may shorten, leading to relapse. Alveolar bone remodeling is completed within one month, periodontal fiber remodeling within 3-4 months, and gingival collagen fiber remodeling within 4-6 months. However, elastic fibers in the dentogingival and interdental areas complete remodeling after eight months (232 days). Tooth movement without surrounding tissue remodeling increases the likelihood of the teeth returning to their original position [11].

Hard Tissue Factors

Teeth that have recently been moved are surrounded by slightly calcified osteoid bone, making them less stable and more prone to return to their original position. Normally, trabecular bone is oriented perpendicular to the tooth axis, but during orthodontic treatment, it becomes parallel to the direction of pressure. During the retention phase, these teeth may return to their original position [11].

Occlusal Factors

The way teeth occlude at the end of treatment can affect the stability of their position. If the teeth occlude well at the end of treatment, the orthodontic results will be more stable. When the upper or lower teeth are larger than one another, the oral cavity compensates for the condition. For example, larger upper anterior teeth may cause a deep overbite, while larger lower teeth may lead to an edge-to-edge incisor relationship. Although this information is theoretically acceptable, it has not been clinically proven [11].

Soft Tissue Factors

Teeth are located in the balance between the tongue on the lingual side and the cheeks and lips on the buccal and labial aspects, known as the neutral zone. Although the tongue muscles are stronger, a healthy periodontium will resist tooth proclination. However, if the teeth move out of this

stability zone, they will become increasingly unstable, especially in the lower labial segment. Excessive proclination or retroclination of the teeth can lead to relapse, as the supporting tissues remain active, with bone resorption in the sockets and supporting tissues under pressure. Additionally, if the arch form changes drastically, relapse may occur due to tissue pressure. Therefore, it is advisable to maintain the lower arch form throughout treatment and adjust the upper arch form accordingly [11].

Failure to Eliminate Underlying Cause

The cause of malocclusion should be identified during diagnosis, and the treatment phase should be planned to eliminate or reduce the severity of the malocclusion to prevent relapse. For example, failure to stop the thumb-sucking habit, which causes tooth protrusion, can lead to relapse [11].

Growth Factors

Although most growth in patients is completed by the end of puberty, small changes may occur over time, increasing the risk of tooth relapse. These changes can contribute to relapse. The third molars are the last to appear during tooth development. In many cases, the third molars erupt around 18 to 21 years of age. By this age, most patients have typically completed their orthodontic treatment. The pressure caused by the eruption of the third molars is considered a factor in the irregularity of the anterior tooth alignment, making them prone to relapse[11]. Dental relapse also occur because of inappropriate diagnosis and treatment, incomplete treatment, inappropriate retention devices, patient who are not cooperative in using retention devices, failing to eliminate etiological factors of malocclusion, and failing to anticipate new forces that occur caused by changes in the arrangement of the new teeth. Therefore, after orthodontic is completed, the results of the treatment need to be maintained so that they do not return to their original position by using retention devices [13].

Relapse Tendency after Orthodontic Treatment

According to Areal & Gandia (2013), the tendency for relapse is greater and occurs more frequently in the lower jaw compared to the upper jaw during the first ten years post treatment [14]. A significant portion of cases involving crowding or lower incisor crowding that develops in late adolescence is due to delayed mandibular growth in a normal growth pattern. Especially when the lower incisors were previously irregular, even minimal mandibular growth occurring between the ages of 16 and 20 can lead to a relapse to the original position [15]. The increase in lower incisor irregularity is a common phenomenon after orthodontic treatment. Several studies have confirmed that the likelihood of lower incisor irregularity typically increases during the second, third, and fourth decades of life in untreated subjects, as well as those who have previously undergone orthodontic treatment. The most significant changes in untreated occlusion occur before the age of 18, with most changes happening in the mid-third decade of life. This period coincides with the age range during which most orthodontic treatments are carried out, further complicating retention planning [14]. Supracrestal periodontal fibers take the longest time to realign. Additionally, the neuromuscular system also requires adaptation to the new tooth positions. Therefore, extended retention for corrected teeth can help in reducing the risk of relapse [14].

Retention

Retention is the process of maintaining teeth in their ideal aesthetic and functional positions using various mechanical appliances. It is designed to prevent teeth from moving back toward their

original malocclusion positions while allowing them to move freely in all other directions. Post treatment relapse prevention typically involves the use of retainers. According to Naraghi S et al. (2020), patients who do not use retainers experience greater changes after orthodontic treatment compared to those who do use retainers [14].

Types of Retainers

Retainers are divided into two types based on their usage: removable retainers, which can be taken off and put on by the patient, and fixed retainers [16].

Removable Retainers

Removable retainers are those that patients can take off and put back on themselves. These retainers are generally worn part-time, usually at night, except in patients with a high risk of relapse [15]. Removable retainers have several advantages, such as being safer for patients with periodontal tissue issues compared to fixed retainers, easy to clean, usable part-time, and their effectiveness depends on the patient's level of cooperation [11]. However, their disadvantages include speech impairment at the beginning of use, and unsatisfactory aesthetics [17]. Besides, there are potential for damage which can affect the stability of the teeth and the prognosis of treatment relies on patient compliance. If the patient does not follow the guidelines for retainer use, the risk of relapse increases [11].There are several types of removable retainers, including:

Hawley Retainer

The Hawley retainer consists of an acrylic baseplate, a labial bow with an adjustment loop extending from canine to canine, and retentive components such as Adam's clasps on the first permanent molars [18]. The Hawley retainer provides good retention, prevents anterior teeth from rotating, and closes gaps in extraction spaces [19] It can close small gaps in the anterior segment and control overbite [20].

Wraparound (Clip) Retainer

The second most commonly used removable retainer is the wraparound or clip retainer, which consists of a plastic bar reinforced by wire along the labial and lingual surfaces of the teeth. In the lower jaw, a clip on retainer from canine to canine is often used, while in the upper jaw, an anterior clip-on retainer can be useful for adults with long clinical crowns [19]

Clear (Vacuum-formed) Retainer

This retainer is made from a clear plastic material that is softened and then vacuum-formed over the teeth. The material is transparent and thin, making the clear retainer almost invisible, which most patients prefer due to aesthetic reasons. It is economical, less likely to break, easy to make, and does not interfere with speech. The clear retainer is usually worn only at night. It is most commonly used for the upper jaw and is equally effective in maintaining the alignment of the incisors as bonded-wire retainers [19]

Begg Retainer

The Begg retainer features a labial arch that extends around the distal aspect of the molar to maintain post-diastema closure. It allows for occlusal settling because no wires cross the occlusal surface. This retainer is less retentive than the Hawley retainer, and the labial bow is more prone to distortion [21].

Barrer Retainer

The Barrer retainer is an active retainer used to correct minor irregularities in the alignment of the incisors. Active retainers are those that actively maintain the relationship between the arches during post treatment growth or actively correct minor irregularities in tooth position [22].When placed in the mouth, active force is applied to the teeth until the desired movement is completed. The device can be worn during sleep to minimize changes in maxillomandibular relationships that may occur due to disharmonious growth, encourage differential eruption, and prevent tooth movement as a compensation for skeletal changes resulting from post treatment growth [15]. Positioners Positioners are active devices made from elastomeric materials and are used in cases where occlusion is not optimal at the end of treatment [11].

Fixed Retainers

A fixed orthodontic appliance is an appliance attached to the teeth by the dentist and cannot be removed by the patient until treatment is completed. Fixed retainers are typically indicated for maintaining the position of lower incisors during mandibular growth, closing diastemas, preserving space for bridges, patients with periodontal issues prone to tooth migration, in cases of severe rotation, post-correction of palatal canines, and severe overbites [22].Fixed retainers are usually bonded to the palatal surfaces of the teeth using composite material [15].There are several types of bonded retainers, including multi strand stainless steel retainers bonded to all teeth, rigid retainers, and canine-to-canine retainers. Palatal bonded retainers are less commonly used than lingual bonded retainers because they are more prone to damage from occlusal contact. Labial bonded retainers are indicated for patients who remove orthodontic appliances earlier than recommended, before the eruption of third molars, or as an adjunct to vacuum-formed retainers after the correction of severe canine and incisor rotation with a high risk of relapse [15].The advantages of fixed retainers include the fact that they do not need to be removed and reinserted, are aesthetic, and do not cause tissue irritation in the pad area as with removable Hawley retainers. However, the drawbacks include a more complicated and time-consuming installation process, difficulty in cleaning the teeth and susceptibility to damage [22].and An example of a fixed retainer is the lingual bar, which consists of a wire attached to the canines and resting on the lingual surface of the lower incisors, just above the cingulum [19] Bonded retainers offer the benefit of being immediately usable, but they can lead to the accumulation of debris and are prone to cracking and discoloration. Patients with fixed retainers must be educated that any residual active force in the wire can cause unwanted tooth movement. Although the long-term use of bonded retainers does not pose significant long-term dental health risks, patients must maintain meticulous oral hygiene around the retainer [15]

Duration of Orthodontic Retention

Retention is necessary for all patients who undergo fixed orthodontic treatment. Ideally, the use of retainers should be implemented as follows: [19] a. Everyday Use for the First 3 to 4 Months. During the first 3-4 months (initial phase), retainers should be worn consistently everyday. For removable retainers, they should only be removed during meals. Fixed retainers should be flexible enough to allow for individual tooth movement during chewing [19] b. Part-Time Use for 12 Months. After the initial full-time use, retainers should be worn part-time (typically at night) for the next 12 months. This phase helps to solidify the new tooth positions as the tissues stabilize [19] c. Continuation during Growth Periods. If the patient is still growing, part-time use of retainers should continue until the growth period is complete. This is important to accommodate any

changes that might occur as the jaws and surrounding structures develop [19] For practical purposes and to prevent relapse, nearly all patients who have undergone early until permanent dentition treatment will need to retain their incisors at least the end of adolescence. Additionally, in cases of skeletal disproportion, part-time retainer use is recommended [19]

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that relapse is a potential occurrence following orthodontic treatment. Relapse may happen due to natural growth influenced by the forces from interdental fibers and dentogingival fibers in the periodontal tissues. Relapse can be prevented with the use of retainers.

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