

Patients' knowledge and perceptions of interproximal reduction as part of orthodontic treatment in a publicly funded orthodontic service in the Republic of Ireland

Précis: Interproximal reduction was perceived as preferable to extraction in orthodontic patients treated in a publicly funded orthodontic service in the Republic of Ireland.

Abstract

Introduction: Extractions for orthodontic reasons are on the decline and interproximal reduction (IPR) has become a popular alternative. No survey has been undertaken to identify patients' perceptions regarding IPR.

Objectives: To determine patients' knowledge and perceptions of having IPR as part of orthodontic treatment.

Method: A questionnaire was administered to patients receiving orthodontic treatment with IPR in a publicly funded orthodontic service. Information was collected on demographics, knowledge and perceptions of IPR.

Results: Thirty patients completed the questionnaire. Only 17% were aware of IPR before treatment, but all clearly understood its rationale after explanation. Most (93%) "did not mind" IPR being undertaken, 37% considered it "uncomfortable" and 13% "painful". All perceived IPR as preferable to extraction. Compared to extraction, IPR was most commonly perceived as less painful, faster, and allowing retention of natural teeth. When asked what patients would tell a friend or family member about IPR, a small number would mention advantages over extraction, speed of the procedure and benefits for treatment. Most would provide reassurance as to the lack of pain and discomfort.

Conclusions: Although initially unfamiliar with IPR, patients found it easy to understand on explanation and considered it uncomfortable rather than painful. Minimal negative feedback was received and IPR was perceived as preferable to extraction.

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