

Overview of TMD and orofacial pain

In the first of a three-part series, DR DERMOT CANAVAN looks at temporomandibular disorders (TMD). In the following two parts, which will be published in the Winter 2004 and Spring 2005 issues of the *Journal of the Irish Dental Association*, he will look at headaches that present as facial pain, neuralgia, dental pain and atypical facial/dental pain.

Introduction

Orofacial pain is an important issue for both patients and clinicians alike. Pain within the oral cavity is most frequently dental in origin (odontogenic) and extra-orally the most common source of pain is musculoskeletal (TMD). Once these conditions have been excluded, the diagnostic process becomes more difficult. The differential diagnosis for non-odontogenic pain is extensive. Possible causes of orofacial pain range from intracranial disease to a variety of benign facial pain syndromes. This article briefly reviews some of the more common disorders associated with persistent orofacial pain, while the implications for general practice dentistry are also noted.

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