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### Is gum disease killing you're patient?

This is the title of a lecture by a world authority on gum disease I attended.

Bacteria in the mouth are involved in the 2 most prevalent diseases that dentists treat; namely Dental decay and Gum disease can be broadly divided into gingivitis (inflammation of the gum) and periodontitis (inflammation of the bone and gum around the teeth). Both diseases are caused by bacterial build-up (called plaque) on the teeth, above and under unattached gum. Not all the plaque is removed by tooth brushing and flossing and builds up in hard to clean areas and become hard rough calculus.

In gingivitis the build up leads to swollen, inflamed gums that bleed easily but cause no pain and patients are not aware of the disease. Most patients I see have gingivitis (most common disease in humans) but the least likely for patients to seek help for because they are not aware of it.

In periodontal disease, the build up leads to swollen inflamed gum with loosening of the gum and loss of bone supporting the teeth and gum pockets surrounding the teeth that fester and collect bacterial plaque. The teeth eventually loosen and drift. Patients usually unaware of it and often only seek help when the disease is far advanced.

Why is gum disease killing you?

Many authoritative studies involving huge population groups show that gum disease plays an important role in:

- Coronary heart disease: (CHD)
- Glycemic control on diabetics
- Adverse pregnancy outcomes
- Malignant disease

The prevalence of CHD is significantly increased by periodontal disease. Patients, with poor oral health are very likely to get further cardiac events. Relation between increased bone loss, due to periodontal treatment maintenance.

Gum inflammation plays an important role in artero-sclerosis and loss of blood vessel elasticity that leads to high blood pressure. After treatment for P.D the elasticity increased, having the effect of lowering blood pressure. Diseases related to high blood pressure are less likely to occur for e.g. STROKE.

The treatment of periodontal disease, has positive effects on hyperlipidemia and affect the ratio between good and bad cholesterol positively.