

Dental Infections and Atherosclerosis

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In most countries, coronary heart disease is one of the leading causes of morbidity and death. This report reviews the current evidence indicating that oral conditions (specifically periodontitis) may be a risk factor for atherosclerosis and its clinical manifestations and provides new preliminary data. This review is done in the context of the research indicating that inflammation plays a central role in atherogenesis and that there is substantial systemic microbial and inflammatory burden associated with periodontal disease. Our review concentrates on 5 longitudinal studies that show oral conditions being associated with the onset of coronary heart disease while controlling for a variety of established coronary heart disease risk factors. In addition to published evidence, preliminary findings from our Dental Atherosclerosis Risk in Community study also indicate that periodontal disease is associated with carotid intimal-medial wall thickness, a measure of Subclinical atherosclerosis, adjusting for factors known to be associated with both conditions. (Am Heart J 1999; 138:S528-S533.)

Abstract Related to MS #503A