



Interdental cleaning made easy

Patients prefer this new tool

Written by K. Mussche

Interdental biofilm is the main cause of caries, gingivitis and periodontal disease, yet only a small minority of people clean interdentally. In her research among a group of young people with intact interdental spaces but who suffered from gingivitis, dentist and iTOP lecturer Dr Franka Baranović Huber proved that a new generation of interdental brushes, Curaprox prime, are quick and highly effective in re-establishing gingival health. What is more, the study participants liked interdental brushing, and it thus easily became a daily habit.

Despite dental professionals engaging patients on cleaning interdentally, it is not established at all among patients. Even in Switzerland and Germany, two countries that place a relatively great emphasis on oral hygiene, only 5% of people clean their interdental spaces daily and 10% brush interdentally once a week. The remaining 85% rarely clean their interdental spaces, if at all. These catastrophic figures show most people are not doing enough to avoid gingivitis, which in the long term can progress to tooth loss. A possible explanation for this behaviour is that dental professionals tend to recommend flossing, especially to patients with closed interdental spaces and intact papillae. But patients tend to find using floss challenging, and that only lowers their motivation to use it. Luckily, the latest generation of interdental brushes are more effective than floss, easy to use and able to penetrate even closed interdental spaces.

Easily restoring gingival health

Dr Huber's study aimed to determine just how effectively interdental brushing reduces interdental inflammation. She did so by tracking a bleeding on interdental brushing (BOB) score for 33 healthy patients with intact interdental papillae and without periodontitis over the course of six months. The BOB score was determined by stimulating the interdental spaces with the novel interdental brush in a simple once in and out movement, rather than using a traditional periodontal probe. Dr Huber provided the study participants with the correct size interdental brushes and instructed them on the correct technique. A second aim of the study was to evaluate long-term patient compliance with daily interdental brushing over the same period.

The results of the study were astounding. The participants' BOB scores went down drastically from 86% to 4% **within three weeks**. In other words, through daily interdental brushing, the participants managed to resolve their interdental inflammation and re-establish their gingival health very quickly. Regarding the participants' compliance with daily interdental brushing, 72% of the participants were still using interdental brushes regularly—five times per week or more—after six months. This suggests that interdental brushing is accepted by patients and demonstrates that a great number of the study participants had turned it into a daily habit.

A new-generation interdental brush is on the market

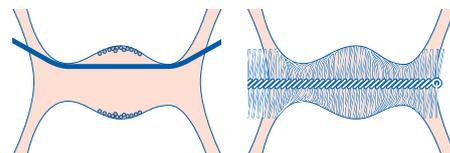
"A lot of dental professionals have no clue about interdental brushes—and I was one of them before encountering iTOP," Dr Huber said. "They think their use is strictly linked to illness, by which I mean treating patients who have periodontal disease, certainly not to health. We have to reverse this idea. The Curaprox prime interdental brushes used in the study are revolutionary in that they are fine enough to access at least 93% of closed, healthy interdental spaces."



Curaprox Prime interdental brushes

"Most professionals recommend floss to patients, but flossing should be confined to very tight interdental spaces that cannot be cleaned with interdental brushes. Contrary to interdental brushes, floss does not fill out the whole interdental space and conse-

quently removes less bacteria. However, it is important to determine the right size interdental brush for each interdental space. A special interdental access probe is available with the brushes to do this easily and quickly. You simply insert it horizontally or at a slight angle into the patient's interdental space until you feel friction. The colour that remains visible closest to the tooth's buccal surface indicates the corresponding Curaprox colour-coded interdental brush."



Floss. versus Curaprox interdental brushes

A true compliance booster

"The biggest achievement of these interdental brushes is not even their efficacy," Dr Huber explained. "It is their high acceptance among patients which makes them an invaluable tool. They are so easy and quick to use. One insertion a day with the right brush is enough to keep patients' gingivae healthy."

"The study highlights a crucial point, and that is that repeated, individual instruction leads to high compliance rates among patients. Patient-centred communication and empathy are key for long-term behavioural change. Dental professionals should literally take their patients by the hand and train them step by step through the process of learning the peculiarities of their own mouth and the morphology of their interdental spaces. It is our duty to empower patients to stay healthy rather than heal them."

The study of Dr Huber can be accessed at www.bit.ly/3hVruom or scan the QR code:

