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Temporomandibular joint dysfunction in patients with stroke

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Statement of the Problem: Although stroke and stroke related symptoms had been investigated in wide spectrum, yet variety of knowledge stands behind the curtain to be found. We consider that the Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJD) is one of the symptoms that mentioned above due to stroke related outcomes such as orofacial dysfunction, facial paralysis and mastication problems. Despite the orofacial symptoms due to stroke had been investigated separately these symptoms are originated from one system entitled with stomatognathic system. From this point of view our aim was to assess TMJD in patients with stroke.

Method: Total 100 participants, 50 healthy and 50 who had stroke were recruited into this study. Digital calliper and algometer were used in order to assess temporomandibular joint range of motion and masticatory muscle pressure pain threshold. Labial commissure angle measurement was used for assessing facial paralysis severity. Fonseca questionnaire was used for TMJD assessment and categorization. In addition, dominant mastication shift was measured by the question that asks the pre-post stroke dominant mastication side.

Findings: In intergroup comparison significant decrease was found in all temporomandibular range of motion parameters in favor of stroke group. Despite the fact that no significant difference was found between groups for the pain threshold in masticatory muscles except for middle part of the left temporalis muscle, values were higher in healthy group. As a result of intergroup examination of labial commissure angle degree, Fonseca questionnaire score, it was found that labial commissure angle and Fonseca questionnaire scores were higher in stroke group. Intragroup examination of stroke patients showed that dominant mastication side shift was seen in stroke patients.

Conclusion: It was concluded that, TMJD prevalence was higher in stroke group compared to healthy group and use of modalities specific to TMJD treatment would be beneficial.

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