

Anxiety as a Factor Associated with Temporomandibular Dysfunction in Adults: A Literature Review

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RESUMO

Introduction: Temporomandibular dysfunction (TMD) refers to a set of alterations affecting the temporomandibular joint and masticatory muscles, characterized by orofacial pain, functional limitation, and joint noises. It is a condition of multifactorial etiology, involving biological, mechanical, and psychosocial factors. Among these, anxiety has been widely associated with the development and worsening of TMD, as it promotes physiological and behavioral changes capable of directly impacting the stomatognathic system.

Objectives: Based on recent scientific literature, this study addresses the relationship between anxiety and temporomandibular dysfunction in adults, highlighting its role as a factor associated with the development and intensification of the condition. **Materials and Methods:** A narrative literature review was conducted based on studies published in the PubMed database in the last two years. Articles addressing the association between anxiety and TMD in adults were included, considering aspects such as pain, muscle activity, and parafunctional habits. **Results:** The literature shows that individuals with high levels of anxiety have a higher prevalence of signs and symptoms of TMD, including muscle pain, limitation of mandibular movements, and joint discomfort. Anxiety is observed to be related to increased muscle tension in the masticatory region, especially in the masseter and temporal muscles, contributing to fatigue and pain. Furthermore, parafunctional habits, such as bruxism and teeth clenching, are frequently associated with anxiety, favoring overload of the temporomandibular joint. Another relevant aspect is the influence of anxiety on pain modulation, reducing the pain threshold and increasing the perception of discomfort. **Conclusion:** Recent evidence indicates that anxiety is strongly associated with temporomandibular dysfunction in adults, contributing to its development and worsening through increased muscle tension, the occurrence of parafunctional habits, and the intensification of pain; therefore, TMD should be understood as a multifactorial condition, and it is essential to consider emotional factors in the clinical approach for more effective and comprehensive management.

Palavras-chave: Temporomandibular Dysfunction; Anxiety; Orofacial Pain; Bruxism; Psychosocial Factors.