Simple Muco-Gingival Problems

Simple muco-gingival problems include most commonly an aberrant frenum associated with minimal or no attached gingiva. These problems occur most frequently in the mandibular incisor area, however can be found anywhere in the mouth. Traditionally, if a frenum was present in association with minimal or no attached gingiva a frenectomy was done and the area augmented with a free gingival graft. This treatment solution is very effective in removing the frenum and regenerating lost attached gingiva, however the need to involve the maxillary palatal tissue often creates a very painful second surgical site. Another possibility is to use a connective tissue graft instead of a free gingival graft; this has the advantage of reducing post-operative palatal pain. When using a connective tissue graft the recipient site gingiva must be preserved so that a frenectomy can rarely be done. Healing often leads to augmentation of gingival tissue, but retention of the frenum.

Another solution to the problem presented by a significant frenum attachment with or without reduced keratinized gingival tissue is to do a frenectomy only. This has several advantages. Treatment time is very short compared to procedures involving procuring palatal tissue. There is considerably less post-operative pain and complications. Cost to the patient is likewise greatly reduced. Disadvantages should also be considered. There is no gain in root coverage without a gingival graft except in rare instances where elimination of the frenum allows for minor "rebound" of the gingiva. Likewise, there is not an esthetic improvement except in instances where tissue is highly inflamed from a constant frenum pull and elimination of the frenum improves the clinical appearance of the gingiva.

When, where and how to choose a frenectomy only as the preferred treatment takes careful pre-operative observation and diagnosis. In this newsletter I've included some photos of clinical cases that will present several examples of cases where frenectomies
were done without use of gingival grafts. Look at the pre-operative situation carefully and visualize how the frenectomy can improve upon the clinical parameters. In many cases a frenectomy without gingival augmentation will lead to more problems. In addition, there are situations where a frenectomy only is planned, however during the procedure the need for gingival grafting becomes a necessity.

Future newsletters will present clinical cases of additional muco-gingival problems, especially around implants, where manipulation of the keratinized gingiva without gingival grafting is very effective at resolving these problems.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR PHOTOS

Next Issue: Further Muco-Gingival Problems

Do you have suggestions for future topics? Call my office or e-mail your ideas.

Questions/Comments Please call during Office Hours 301.871.7111 Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri. 8 am - 5 pm or E-mail to mperio@msn.com

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