

Dr. James E. Metz

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The Metz Center for Sleep Dentistry | 1271 E. Broad St. | Columbus, OH 43205 | 614.252.4444 | www.themetzcenter.com

TMJ/Orofacial Pain & Dental Sleep Medicine

Spring 2016

Can Palpation-Induced Muscle Pain Pattern Contribute to the Differential Diagnosis Among Temporomandibular Disorders, Primary Headaches Phenotypes and Possible Bruxism

Costa YM, Porporatti AL, et al.

Med Oral Patol Oral Cir Bucal. 2016 Jan 1;21(1): 59-65

The evaluation of possible differences in the distribution or characteristics of palpation-induced pain in the masticatory muscles could be valuable in terms of diagnostic assessment. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of different combinations of anterior temporalis (AT) and masseter palpation-induced pain in the diagnostic of temporomandibular disorder (TMD), primary headaches and bruxism. A total of 1200 dental records of orofacial pain adult patients were analyzed. The outcomes were dichotomously classified (presence/absence) as following: a) AT and/or masseter palpation-induced pain; b) myogenous TMD; c) temporomandibular joint (TMJ) arthralgia (arthrogenous TMD); d) migraine; e) tension-type headache (TTH); f) self-reported bruxism.

Mean age (SD) were 35.7 years (13.4) for 635 included dental records (83% females). Myogenous and arthrogenous TMD, migraine, TTH and bruxism were mainly associated with, respectively, masseter palpation-induced pain, AT or masseter palpation-induced pain, bilateral AT palpation-induced pain, masseter and AT palpation-induced pain and bilateral masseter palpation-induced pain.

Palpation-induced pain in the masticatory muscles may play a role in the differential diagnosis among painful TMD, primary headaches and bruxism.