

esta formación se focaliza en la patología bucal en menoscabo de la Medicina Bucal. Los conocimientos histopatológicos, aunque necesarios, no son tan determinantes como los conocimientos clínicos en el desempeño del odontólogo. ¿De qué sirve conocer la «displasia epitelial», si no se conoce la presentación clínica de una lesión neoplásica? La patología bucal es la última fase del proceso diagnóstico; entretanto que, la Medicina Bucal debe ser la primera etapa del mismo. Como ya se ha puesto de manifiesto anteriormente, ambas disciplinas se complementan y no se puede prescindir de ninguna de ellas si se quiere llegar a un correcto diagnóstico que permita instaurar un tratamiento adecuado.

En la formación pregraduada del odontólogo, la Medicina Bucal debería perseguir «diferenciar lo normal de lo que puede que no sea normal» más que «identificar con precisión la lesión». Esa es, quizás, la labor de la patología bucal que recopila datos histopatológicos, los cuales, junto con los datos clínicos, permiten confirmar el diagnóstico de una lesión. Cuando pasamos al nivel de la formación postgraduada, se repite esta tendencia con una marcada escasez de especialistas en Medicina Bucal. De hecho, esta especialidad no está reconocida en la Unión Europea; mientras que, la Patología Bucal sí es una sólida realidad en muchos países del continente americano. En concreto, México tiene excelentes programas de formación específicos en Patología Bucal y cuenta con patólogos bucales de reconocido prestigio internacional.

El núcleo central de la Medicina Bucal es el diagnóstico clínico basado en el estudio de las lesiones y enfermedades gracias a una herramienta diagnóstica fundamental como es la historia clínica. El juicio clínico es un proceso intelectual complejo que debe desarrollarse de forma protocolizada y ordenada para poder llegar al diagnóstico de sospecha que será confirmado con la ayuda de la patología bucal.

A modo de conclusión, ambas disciplinas, Medicina y Patología Bucal, se necesitan. No se puede ser un buen especialista en Medicina Bucal sin conocimientos de Patología Bucal, ni un buen patólogo bucal sin conocimientos de Medicina Bucal. Son dos partes de un todo que buscan restaurar la salud del enfermo.

## Editorial

### The importance of the clinic in Oral Medicine

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The Oral Medicine is a specialty dental that is responsible for the diagnosis and nonsurgical treatment of diseases of the oral and maxillofacial area; of the oral health of the medically compromised patient and of the impact of systemic diseases on oral mucosa. The oral medicine might be understood as the intermediate link between medicine and dentistry.

The interactions between oral health and systemic health emphasize the importance of this discipline. Already in antiquity, the classic physicians emphasized on the importance of the mouth in relation to the overall health of the individual. Hippocrates or Galen thought in the tongue as a «barometer» of health, and stressed their importance in the diagnosis and prognostic.<sup>1</sup>

Dentistry, as others disciplines of health sciences, is directed toward the modernization and specialization, which can lead to excessive atomization that makes viewing only certain diseases or pathologies and miss the global vision that we are dealing a sick person. The development of these new diagnostic technologies has led to a clear advance and benefit for patients, but it has also led to a change in attitude, where diagnosis is based almost exclusively on the results of these diagnostic tests to the detriment of the clinical and semiologic attitude based on the clinical history of the patient. These techniques have lost its character of ancillary testing that help the diagnosis to become the only diagnostic tests by themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The Oral Medicine emphasizes the importance of diagnosis in direct contact with the patient. You should never miss the reference that, there are no diseases, but patients. Our diagnosis, in appearance limited to scope of the oral cavity, they must be extended to include the whole individual. As I said Jiménez Díaz, «We should never think that we are faced with a few teeth sick, but before a sick of the teeth».<sup>3</sup>

The dentist should be aware of its enormous responsibility in knowledge or, at least, in the clinical detection of different lesions that can be observed in the dental practice. In some lesions, such as in the case of the potentially malignant disorders of the oral mucosa and oral cancer, early diagnosis is crucial for the prognosis and the expectations of the patient's life.

This early diagnosis is very simple since the oral cavity is an area of easy exploration with a direct inspection and palpation requiring sophisticated tests. In fact, biopsy and histopathological study remains today, the «gold standard» for diagnosing oral.

The oral medicine is closely linked with other dental and medical specialties. It should be noted the importance of the oral pathology, which must be considered as part is fundamental and indispensable of the indivisible «Oral Medicine and Pathology», two disciplines that seek the clinical and histological diagnosis of the lesions and alterations of the oral cavity.

However, it is very striking, the low weight of the Oral Medicine in the curricula of dental schools. For example, in Spain, this discipline is only between 2-4% of the entire curriculum, clearly insufficient to the potential impact they can have this knowledge in the professional activity of the dentist. Further, in some cases, this training focuses on the oral pathology to the detriment of the oral medicine. Histopathological knowledge, although necessary, are not such as clinical knowledge in the performance of the dentist. What good is knowing the «epithelial dysplasia», if it do not know the clinical presentation of a neoplastic lesion? The oral pathology is the last phase of the diagnostic process; in the meantime, the oral medicine must be the first stage of the same. As has already been shown above, both disciplines are complementary and we cannot do without any of them if you want to arrive at a correct diagnosis that allows to establish a proper treatment.

In the formation of dentist, the oral medicine should pursue «differentiate normal from what may not be normal» rather than «accurately identify the injury». That is, perhaps, the work of the oral pathology that histopathological collects data, which, along with clinical data, allow us to confirm the diagnosis of an injury. When we turn to the level of the postgraduate training, this trend is repeated with a marked shortage of specialists in Oral Medicine. In fact, this specialty is not recognized in the European Union; whereas, the Oral Pathology if is a solid reality in many countries of

the American continent. In particular, Mexico has excellent specific training programs in oral pathology and oral pathologists of recognized international prestige.

The core of the Oral Medicine is the clinical diagnosis based on the study of lesions and illnesses thanks to a diagnostic tool essential as is the clinical story. Clinical judgment is a complex intellectual process that should be developed in orderly manner in order to achieve the diagnosis of suspicion that will be confirmed with the help of the oral pathology.

By way of conclusion, both disciplines, Oral Medicine and Pathology are needed. It cannot be a good specialist in Oral Medicine, without knowledge of Oral Pathology, nor a good oral pathologist without knowledge of Oral Medicine. They are two parts of a whole that seek to restore the health of the sick.

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