

Cavities Linked to Cardiovascular Disease: The Oral Systemic Connection Thickens

New research spells a clear link between the bacteria known to cause cavities and the incidence of heart attack and stroke, making oral health paramount to reducing ones risk for cardiovascular disease. Oral BioTech makes achieving this ideal oral health an opportunity through its CariFree website where an unparalleled level of education and products is now available.

It has been well accepted within the health care community, and more or less common knowledge, that a link has been established between periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease. This research would indicate that while that relationship undoubtedly exists, there may be another silent but deadly connection. There is one group of bacteria implicated in causing periodontal disease, yet there is another separate group associated with the incidence of cavities. This disease and bacteria are collectively referred to as “dental caries.” While the disease of dental caries itself encompasses many different bacteria, *Streptococcus mutans* has long been implicated in initiating the infection.

Interesting research regarding the oral/systemic link is currently being done at Osaka University Graduate School of Dentistry in Japan by Nakano, et al. One particular study examined cardiovascular patients and assessed three main types of tissue: aortic valves, mitral valves, and aortic wall aneurismal tissue, including the aneurismal clot or thrombus tissues. The findings were not only surprising, but significant in that the most common species found in the cardiovascular specimens was *Streptococcus mutans*. The other alarming correlation is that if *Streptococcus mutans* was found in the mouth, it was found in these cardiovascular tissues 78% of the time.

The study concludes that “*S. mutans* are not only related to bacteremia, (bacterial infections found within the blood) but may be an etiologic factor in the development of cardiovascular diseases.”

This research provides compelling reasons to make sure that the mouth is free from the bacteria that cause cavities. While the cavities themselves are a serious chronic disease for many Americans, this new research indicates the bacteria which cause them may be contributing to inflammation, infection and disease throughout the cardiovascular system. Furthermore, while our healthcare system is working to combat the risk factors for cardiovascular disease related to smoking, blood pressure and cholesterol, we may need to look more comprehensively at the oral/systemic connection. We must look further into the relationship between oral disease causing bacteria and cardiovascular health.

How does this information impact the health of future generations given dental caries is the most prevalent infection in our pediatric population? This is a question that Dr. V. Kim Kutsch, CEO and founder of Oral BioTech, manufacturers of CariFree, is committed to answering. The company is dedicated to creating a lifetime of oral health through relationships, research and product excellence facilitating the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of dental caries. Dr. Kutsch feels that “intercepting dental caries early and helping our youngest children become cavity-free for life may have important life saving benefits that reach far beyond just having a healthier smile.”

For information regarding how oral infectious bacteria like *Streptococcus mutans* impact your dental health and how to prevent and treat this infection, visit www.carifree.com .