

Periodontal Disease Linked to Pneumonia

Pathogens found in dental plaque are genetically identical to the pathogens found in nursing home patients with pneumonia, according to a recent study at the University of Buffalo.

“This is the first study to establish unequivocally a link between dental hygiene and respiratory infection,” said Ali A. El-Solh, M.D., lead author in the study and associate professor of medicine at the UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

Although further study is necessary, this study indicates that patients who improve their oral health may help prevent respiratory tract infections.

According to previous research, other respiratory diseases, such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, may be worsened by oral infections when respiratory bacteria living within the dental plaque of patients with gum disease is inhaled.

People with chronic respiratory disease seem to have poor oral hygiene and more periodontal bone loss than people without respiratory disease, according to the *Oral Health Letter* published by the School of Dental Medicine at the State University of New York at Buffalo.