

## **Assessment of prognosis and treatment goals among general dental practitioners and dental hygienists.**

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**Introduction:** Clinicians are expected to base their treatment strategies of periodontal diseases on patient history, clinical appearance, and previous experience of periodontal disease. Treatment decisions are influenced by their prognostic assessment and treatment goals. Therefore the aim was to study patterns regarding general dental practitioners (GDPs) and dental hygienists (DHs) a) assessment of prognosis, b) setting of treatment goals, and c) estimation of amount of treatment of cases with varying severity of periodontal disease.

**Material and Methods:** Seventy-seven GDPs and 50 DHs in a Swedish county were invited to participate in a questionnaire study. The response rate was 94 %. The questionnaire included patient history, clinical charts and radiographs, of three patient cases with a varying degree of periodontal diseases. Clinicians that judged these patients as diseased assessed the prognosis, proposed treatment goals and estimated amount of treatment, i.e. number of treatment sessions. The clinicians were compared to each other regarding their prognostic assessment and estimated amount of treatment. ANOVA and Tukey's test compared the differences in estimated amount of treatment.

**Results:** The majority of clinicians (58-95%) assessed that a worsening of the periodontal condition (assessment of prognosis) should occur. They had different treatment goals.

Regardless of the clinicians' former prognostic assessment there were almost no differences, overall, in estimated number of treatment sessions ( $p>0.05$ ). The estimated number of treatment sessions ranged from 2 to 3 sessions in all patients.

**Conclusions:** Most clinicians assessed the prognosis as negative. All patients were estimated to require the same amount of treatment even if their periodontal condition differed significantly in severity. This could mean that patients are over- or undertreated in relation to their periodontal condition and indicates that resources are ineffectively used.