## COMMENTARY

## INTERALAR DISTANCE TO ESTIMATE THE COMBINED WIDTH OF THE SIX MAXILLARY ANTERIOR TEETH IN ORAL REHABILITATION TREATMENT

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The article by Gomes and colleagues addresses the use of interalar width in establishing the intercanine distance as a reference to the selection of teeth in removable prosthodontics. The merit of this publication is that the authors not only integrate digital technology to determine interalar width and its relationship to intercanine distance but also corroborate their findings through physical measurements.

The introduction of this article provides a literature review on what is currently carried out as far as tooth selection for removable prosthodontics is concerned. The article written is similar to previous articles written by Hoffman and colleagues<sup>1</sup> and Smith.<sup>2</sup>

Tooth width is not estimated as readily as tooth length. The intent of the article is to develop objective criteria for the selection of tooth width. The authors address this comprehensively for a cross section of the Brazilian population.

In this study, 81 Brazilian subjects/students were analyzed. Digital photography was used to measure the interalar distance and the distance between the tips of the maxillary canines when viewed from the front. Casts were also used to quantify the distance between the distal surfaces of the maxillary canines on a curve. Exclusion criteria included those teeth that exhibited severe attrition, artificial crowns, large restorations, facial alterations, or a history of congenital facial anomalies or facial surgery. No mention was made specifically about tooth positions, such as diastemas and crowding, or whether the patient had undergone orthodontic treatment.

The focus of the authors was on selection of tooth width of the maxillary six anterior teeth. There was no information on how individual tooth width is selected. Esthetic harmony requires appropriate proportions between width and length. It is pertinent to mention that any discussion of width should reference length through established ratios.

The conclusion of the paper was that the interalar distance, when increased by 31% of its value, can suggest the circumferential distance of the six maxillary anterior teeth. This ratio can be used to estimate the mesiodistal width of maxillary anterior teeth selected for a cross section of the Brazilian population.

REFERENCES

- 1. Hoffman W Jr, Bomberg TJ, Hatch RA. Interalar width as a guide in denture tooth selection. J Prosthet Dent 1986;55:219-21.
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