



Oral health in patients with eating disorders

Ulrica Gidlund, Doctoral student, Department of Dental Medicine (DentMed), Karolinska Institutet

Introduction: Severe oral damage is a common, high-impact, yet systematically neglected consequence of eating disorders. Dental erosion, pain, impaired chewing, and visible tooth destruction often persist long after psychiatric symptoms improve, causing ongoing suffering and acting as powerful barriers to eating, social participation, and recovery. Due to limited knowledge and lack of clinical guidance, dental treatment is frequently postponed until “medical recovery,” allowing oral disease to progress, increasing patient distress and leading to extensive, costly, and irreversible rehabilitation needs.

Aims: This doctoral project aims to investigate oral health, oral function, and oral health-related quality of life (OHRQoL) in individuals with eating disorders, and to generate evidence-based criteria for when and how oral rehabilitation should be integrated into multidisciplinary eating-disorder care.

Methods: The project consists of four interconnected studies. Study 1 comprises two qualitative interview studies (Gidlund et al., *Journal of Eating Disorders* 2024; 2025) exploring lived experiences of oral health in individuals in remission. Study 2 is a clinical cross-sectional study comparing oral health status and OHRQoL in adults with a history of eating disorders and matched healthy controls. Study 3 is a randomized controlled clinical trial evaluating the effects of comprehensive oral rehabilitation on OHRQoL, oral function, dental aesthetics, and psychosocial well-being in patients in remission. Study 4 is a prospective cohort study assessing changes in subjective and objective oral function before and after oral rehabilitation, comparing minimally invasive and prosthetic treatment strategies.

Clinical implications: Results provide a scientific basis for earlier dental intervention, with potential to reduce pain, stigma, nutritional difficulties, prolonged suffering, and the substantial personal costs associated with delayed, extensive dental rehabilitation.

Supervisors: Göran Dahllöf, DDS, PhD, professor, DentMed, KI

Yvonne Von Hauswolff-Juhlin, MD, PhD, Assoc. professor, DentMed and Department of Clinical Neuroscience, KI

Pernilla Larsson-Gran, DDS, PhD, Assoc. professor, Department of Dental Science, Malmö Universitet

Anastasios Grigoriadis, DDS, PhD, Assoc. professor, DentMed KI

Joannis Grigoriadis, DDS, PhD, Ass. professor, DentMed, KI