

Treating your periodontal pockets may benefit your pocket book

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A new study in the November issue of the *Journal of Periodontology* found that prevention of periodontal diseases may lead to savings on not only dental costs, but also medical care costs. Periodontal, or gum diseases have been linked to systemic health conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory problems.

The study, conducted in Japan, examined the effect of periodontal diseases on medical and dental costs in 4,285 patients over a 3.5 year time span. The patients were between the ages of 40-59. Researchers found that cumulative health care costs were 21% higher for those patients with severe periodontal disease than those with no periodontal disease. Severe periodontal disease, or periodontitis, involves bone loss and diminished attachment around the teeth.

“While previous studies have evaluated the potential link between periodontal diseases and other systemic conditions, this study provides an interesting analysis of total health care costs and the financial impact of having periodontal diseases,” explained JOP editor Kenneth Kornman, DDS. “The research suggests that patients with severe periodontal diseases incur higher overall health care expenses as compared to those patients with no periodontal disease. Prevention of periodontal disease may be very important in overall health, and this study suggests that it may also indirectly translate into lower total health care costs.”

“Everyone is looking for ways to reduce health care costs,” said Susan

Karabin, DDS, President of the American Academy of Periodontology.
“Especially those who are in an age category where they are more susceptible to periodontal diseases. Because of the relationship between the mouth and the rest of the body, treating periodontal disease may be one simple way to decrease total health care costs. If caught early, periodontal diseases can be treated using simple non-surgical techniques which can restore your mouth to a healthy state.”

Source: American Academy of Periodontology

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