

Study reveals new link between periodontal and cerebrovascular diseases

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A new study has revealed a relationship between chronic periodontitis and lacunar infarct, two common diseases in the elderly. Chronic periodontitis is an inflammatory disease of the gums, whereas lacunar infarct is a type of cerebral small vessel disease that can lead to a stroke.

Additional research is needed to understand this link. It is hypothesized that periodontitis leads to systemic inflammation and, as a result, the health of the blood vessels could be affected. On the other hand, [chronic periodontitis](#) and lacunar infarct may share common [vascular risk factors](#) such as hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol.

"We observed that people diagnosed with periodontal disease had about a 4-fold increased risk of developing lacunar stroke compared with those without periodontitis. If further prospective cohort studies confirm our findings, interventional studies should be performed to assess the potential benefit of periodontal therapy in patients with lacunar stroke and periodontitis," said Dr. Yago Leira, lead author of the *European Journal of Neurology* study. "Periodontal treatment may also decrease [systemic inflammation](#) and, therefore, it may reduce the risk of developing lacunar infarct."

More information: Y. Leira et al, Chronic periodontitis is associated with lacunar infarct: a case-control study, *European Journal of Neurology* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/ene.13080](https://doi.org/10.1111/ene.13080)

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