

Orthodontics no guarantee of long-term oral health

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A commonly held belief among the general public is orthodontic treatment will prevent future tooth decay. Research undertaken at the University of Adelaide has found that this is not the case.

Published in the journal *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, the study, conducted by Dr. Esma J Dogramaci and co-author Professor David Brennan from the University's Adelaide Dental School, assessed the long-term dental health of 448 people from South Australia.

"The study found that people who had orthodontic treatment did not have better dental health later in life," says Dr. Dogramaci.

"Patients often complain about their crooked [teeth](#) and want braces to make their teeth straight so they can avoid problems, like decay, in the future."

The study, which followed people from the age of 13 until they were 30, recorded patients' dental health behaviours and the number of decayed, missing or filled teeth.

"By the age of 30 over a third of participants had

received orthodontic treatment," says Dr. Dogramaci.

"There is a misconception amongst patients that orthodontic treatment prevents tooth decay, but this is not the case."

The cost of [orthodontic treatment](#), in which crooked teeth are realigned using braces worn over several years, varies from approximately AUS\$3000 to \$13,000 according to the severity of the problems. Braces are becoming increasingly popular, with one in five patients being adults. The global orthodontics market is predicted to be worth more than US\$6 billion by 2023.

"Evidence from the research clearly shows that people cannot avoid regularly brushing their teeth, good oral hygiene and regular dental check-ups to prevent decay in later life," says Dr. Dogramaci.

"Having your teeth straightened does not prevent [tooth decay](#) in later life."

More information: Esma J. Dogramaci et al. The influence of orthodontic treatment on dental caries: An Australian cohort study, *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/cdoe.12446](#)

Provided by University of Adelaide

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