



Did the Pandemic Change Future Treatment Choices Amongst Orthodontists?



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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented orthodontists with several obstacles, as well as a shift in perspective on approaches to treatment planning and treatment. Due to the practice limitations imposed by the spread of the virus, many orthodontic offices turned to tele-orthodontics and greater use of clear aligner treatment. This study will survey orthodontists to determine whether adopters have found both tele-orthodontics and an increase in clear aligner treatment to be positive additions to their practice and a treatment modality that is effective and efficient for patient care and that they intend to continue. If not, why.

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine if the pandemic changed future treatment choices amongst orthodontists
2. To determine if orthodontists use clear aligner treatment more often than they did prior to the pandemic
3. To determine how many orthodontic offices that used tele-orthodontics during the pandemic plan to continue with it into the future

METHODS

This research will consist of an exploratory study, assessed through a 19-question survey. The survey will have a cover letter discussing the aims of the study and will be distributed through the American Association of Orthodontists to approximately 6600 members, with the intention of recruiting a minimum of 50 respondents. The survey is composed of 19 questions, but some respondents will answer fewer questions depending on their response to earlier questions. The planned statistical analysis will be descriptive information analyzed in the form of percentage of categorical responses. This data will be compared according to various demographic information such as gender, years of practice, type of practice, etc. The survey questions were designed to: 1) establish demographics, 2) determine whether tele-orthodontics and clear aligners are used by the orthodontists in their practices 3) Assess whether or not the usage of clear aligners and tele-orthodontics has changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This study has been approved by the Roseman University of Health Sciences Institutional Review Board [#2021-025]. Data collected will be analyzed with IBM® SPSS® version 26 (Armonk, NY). Descriptive statistics will be calculated using Chisquare tests.

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no difference in treatment choices post-pandemic.
2. There will be no difference in the use of clear aligners post-pandemic.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

It is anticipated that 20% of orthodontists that incorporated tele-orthodontics into their practice will continue to offer this service into the future. It is also anticipated that there will be an increase in the use of clear aligners by 10%.

VARIABLES

Dependent:

- Percentage increase or decrease of the use of Clear aligner therapy and teleorthodontics as a result of the pandemic.

Independent:

- 19 question survey designed to:
 - establish demographics,
 - determine whether tele-orthodontics and clear aligners are used by the orthodontists in their practices
 - assess whether or not the usage of clear aligners and tele-orthodontics has changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- The 6600 members in which the questionnaire is sent to, with the intention of recruiting a minimum of 50 respondents.

RESEARCH DESIGN & SAMPLE

- An exploratory study research design
- 50 participants minimum

INCLUSION & EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion Criteria

Exclusion Criteria

- 6600 Orthodontist associated with the American Association of Orthodontics

- Orthodontist not included from the AAO selection.
- Orthodontist included in the list but not currently practicing at a practice or institution.

STATISTICS

Data collected will be analyzed with IBM® SPSS® version 26 (Armonk, NY). Descriptive statistics will be calculated using Chisquare tests.

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