

Study Finds People with Gum Disease More Likely to Die of COVID-19 Virus

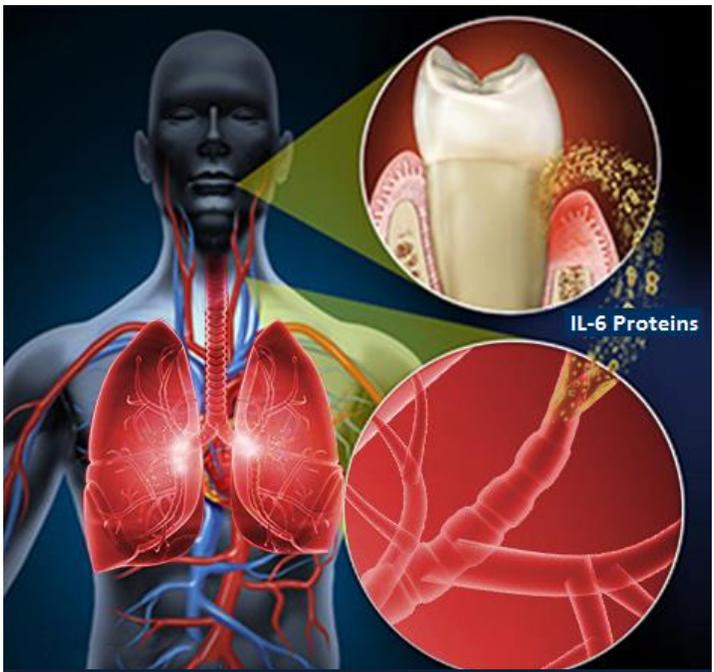
In their 3-month study and just-released report, *“The Mouth-COVID Connection”* (MCC), an international team of dental researchers found an alarming link between gum disease and coronavirus. Their most unnerving discovery –hospitalized coronavirus patients are far more likely to die of respiratory failure if they suffered from gum disease before contracting COVID-19.

August 10th, 2020, Los Angeles, CA – According to a growing body of scientific evidence, including patient studies and dozens of peer-reviewed articles from dentists and oral healthcare clinicians, gum disease (also known as periodontitis) plays a role in a range of seemingly unrelated health problems, including stroke, Alzheimer’s, diabetes, and cancer.

The latest research and report, titled *“The Mouth Covid Connection”* (MCC), suggests a disturbing link between the bacteria produced by swollen, red, bleeding gums and bone loss – symptoms of chronic periodontitis – and COVID-19, the virus and global pandemic that’s claimed more than 650,000 lives and continues to baffle infection disease experts.

The study, carried out by Dr. Shervin Molayem, a U.S. dental surgeon based in Los Angeles and founder of the UCLA Dental Research Journal and Dr. Carla Pontes, a scientist and healthcare researcher in South Africa, concluded that gum disease can lead to high levels of IL-6 (Interleukin), a harmful protein which can increase the risk of suffering of suffering life-threatening respiratory problems. The study was prompted by earlier research regarding COVID-19 patients in Germany who, when tested for the IL-6 protein while hospitalized, in critical condition, and unable to breathe without the help of a ventilator.

The MCC study suggests that COVID-19 patients with bad gums face a much greater risk of generating harmful IL-6 proteins that spread to their lungs and, when Combined with the COVID-19 virus, can contribute to A life- threatening respiratory crisis. “Gum disease has been linked to other breathing ailments, including pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) so it’s biologically possible to find a link to COVID-19 respiratory problems, said Dr. Molayem. “What shocked us was to learn the IL-6 protein is the chemical culprit that makes COVID-19 so deadly by dealing such a devastating blow to lungs infected with the virus. One tiny, inflammatory protein robbed them of their ability to breathe!”



MCC researchers describe the IL-6 protein as the chemical culprit that makes COVID-19 so deadly. Produced by gum disease bacteria, the protein enters the blood stream, often in large amounts, causing inflammation throughout the body but dealing a particularly devastating blow to lungs infected with COVID-19.

Doctors Molayem and Pontes determined that hospitalized COVID-19 patients with gum disease IL-6 levels above 80pg/ml are **twenty two times more likely to suffer from acute respiratory problems and placed on a ventilator** compared with patients with IL-6 levels below 80 pg/ml. According to the latest coronavirus mortality rates, when a COVID-19 patient suffers respiratory failure, odds of their recovery are grim. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) confirmed the unsettling statistic – when added together, of all U.S. COVID-19 victims placed on ventilators since the pandemic began almost 80% of patients died.

As COVID-19 continues to spread (more than 50,000 new cases are reported each day in the U.S.), MCC researchers urge anyone worried they may have gingivitis or more serious gum disease to get their teeth and gums checked and cleaned as soon as possible. An analysis of the 153,000 Americans who have died since the first U.S. cases were reported underscores the potentially catastrophic role researchers believe gum disease has played – and continues to play – in the pandemic’s rising death toll. Elderly patients over the age of 65, particularly those with immune-compromising, underlying conditions such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, are more like to succumb to life-threatening COVID-19 emergencies, including respiratory failure. MCC researchers say this same group of elderly Americans is more likely to suffer from chronic (“severe”) gum disease than any other age group or patient demographic.

“I’m 70-years old, which puts me in the age group of COVID patients who are more likely to die than anyone else,” exclaimed Jonathan Green, a Los Angeles resident recently diagnosed with gum disease at Bedford Dental Group. “That’s why I’ve been compulsive about masking and other precautions. I’ve been lucky so far but I’m worried my luck may run out now that I’ve been diagnosed with gum disease.”

Researchers hope their findings compel nursing homes to implement a dental screening protocol that will help them determine which patients are more susceptible to gum disease and elevated IL-6 protein levels. They also urge dentists throughout the world begin to educate their patients about life-threatening diseases they may be at risk of contracting if they don’t take care of their teeth and gums by brushing and flossing regularly and getting tested twice a year for gum disease. Since the cause of death of COVID-19 is out-of-control inflammation, Dr. Molayem believes the world’s solution to survival and recovery from the virus is to decrease inflammation in the human body wherever possible.

“While you can’t stop COVID-19 with your toothbrush, you may be able to reduce its severity,” said Dr. David Corradi, President of California Society of Periodontists regarding the [peer-reviewed study](#), to be published in the October issue of the [Journal of the California Dental Association](#). “This highly relevant study demonstrates how inflammation may be associated with severe COVID-19 and it underscores the importance of being screened and treated for periodontal disease”.

Researchers say periodontal disease is the most under-diagnosed ailment in dentistry and they urge anyone who thinks they may have periodontitis to get tested and treated as soon as possible because the link to COVID-19, they insist, is real and COVID-19 is deadly. “As the death toll keeps climbing, the CDC now predicts the virus will be among the leading causes of death in the United States, just behind heart disease and cancer,” said Dr. Molayem. “Now that we suspect periodontitis makes it even deadlier, if you’re worried that you may have gum disease your next trip to the dentist may actually save your life.”

To review the IL-6 study online, please visit: www.MouthCovidConnection.com. News media interested in interviewing with researchers or patients should call (215) 220-6812.