

OP18 HEALTH EXPERIENCES OF ORTHOGNATHIC PATIENTS. A QUALITATIVE STUDY COMPARING SURGERY FIRST AND TRADITIONAL PROTOCOLS

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AIMS: A qualitative research assesses why and how health experiences influence clinical outcomes. This is particularly important for orthognathic patients (OP) who undergo orthodontics and surgery in order to correct both malocclusions and aesthetic defects and who may therefore have an active part in selecting the appropriate treatment, considering the option of surgery first (SF) approach or a traditional sequence (TS) one. A qualitative research study to evaluate the health experience and the patient subjective perceptions of outcome in each protocol was therefore deemed appropriate.

SUBJECTS AND METHOD: In-depths interviews were conducted with 50 orthognathic patients: 25 SF (5 males, 20 females) and 25 TS (7 males, 18 females) who had undergone orthodontics and bimaxillary orthognathic surgery between 2012 and 2015. The patients ranged in age from 17 to 35 years; on average younger for SF. All surgical procedures were conducted by the same experienced surgeon on consecutively treated patients, using three-dimensional digital planning. The average duration of orthodontics was 6 months for SF, 14 months for TS. Inclusion criteria: Class III (14 SF, 17 TS), Class II (6 SF, 3 TS), asymmetries (11 SF, 14 TS), open bite (1 SF, 9 TS). Exclusion criteria: patients refusing interviews or failing to attend post-treatment follow-up. Interviews conducted 1 month after the completion of orthodontics, were recorded and transcribed, and extracted data were analyzed with the 'content analysis'.

RESULTS: All the patients defined the following health experiences as 'important': overall satisfaction with appearance (SF/TS); improved self-confidence and social life after surgery (SF); shorter overall treatment time (SF); less invasively perceived orthodontics (SF); functional recovery (SF/TS)

CONCLUSION: This qualitative study identified a series of 'positive' health experiences that accumulate for SF and TS patients, but the immediate satisfaction with appearance, the overall shorter treatment time and the less invasively perceived orthodontics could possibly be key issues for making patients prefer SF protocol. However, the final choice for a particular surgical approach does not depend exclusively on these qualitative outcomes.