



Applied kinesiology in dentistry: An alternative medicine

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Abstract

Applied kinesiology (AK) concerns the art and science of manual muscle testing, thereby diagnosing an area of dysfunction. AK addresses this interest in that it is a system that attempts to evaluate structural, chemical, and mental aspects of health by manually testing muscles combined with other standard methods of diagnosis. It leads to various conservative, non-invasive treatments involving joint manipulations or mobilisations, myofascial therapies, cranial techniques, meridian and acupuncture skills, clinical nutrition and dietary management, counselling skills, evaluating environmental irritants, and various reflex techniques. This article gives a comprehensive review of applied kinesiology and its applications in dentistry.

Keywords: Applied Kinesiology, Manual Muscle Testing, TENS

Introduction

Kinesiology is the study of muscles and their impact on movement, commonly utilized to evaluate neurologic function. A specialized branch of kinesiology known as "applied kinesiology" employs manual muscle testing (MMT) to assess various bodily functions.^[1] The act of touching a specific part of the body to be examined, such as a scar, infected tooth, joint, or vertebra, is referred to as therapy localization (TL)

The pioneering medical texts on Applied Kinesiology (AK) were penned by American chiropractor George J. Goodheart, Jr., D.C., and were published in 1964. Goodheart observed that muscles, which he examined using standardized muscle testing methods as described

by Kendall and Kendall, exhibited fluctuating strength when patients were stimulated in different ways. The stimulation could be local, focused on the specific muscle, or peripheral, elsewhere on the body. The test muscle's response, which was consistently reproducible, fluctuated between weak and strong, depending on the type of stimulation applied.

The initial and basic conceptual model of health in AK is represented as an equilateral triangle, which is considered the triad of health. The sides of this triad represent the structural, chemical, and mental elements of the human body that can influence muscle strength and ultimately affect human health. These three elements of the triad of health are interconnected and are valuable in AK evaluation.

For instance, when a person experiences fear (mental), it triggers the release of adrenaline (chemical) in the body, which in turn increases the tension in skeletal muscles (structural) in preparation for fight or flight. Different alternative healing professions typically specialize in just one aspect of this three-part health model. Structural treatments include chiropractic care, massage therapy, osteopathy, surgery, and dentistry. Chemical therapies encompass nutrition and medication, while mental therapeutics involve counselling and psychology. With chronic health issues, all three aspects of the health model are often involved, making it crucial to diagnose and treat the primary problem to prevent secondary issues from arising.

Applied kinesiology in Dentistry

Energy testing, such as muscle and kinesiological testing, is a valuable tool in clinical dentistry. It helps in diagnosing issues and also provides insights into how dental treatments can impact various parts of the body or the body as a whole.

Goodheart,^[2-4] in three papers, advocates the use of AK for dental health evaluation, particularly for assessing proper mandibular and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) function, using MMT and TL.

The pain and disorders associated with TMJ can be treated using various techniques in the field of AK. Nerve-related acute and chronic pain due to TMJ dysfunctions can be corrected by using transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), which sends electrical impulses across the surface of the skin and the nerve strands. Bio-TENS is a low-frequency TENS unit that delivers a mild electrical impulse to the muscles involved in jaw function.

AK helps diagnose disruptive influences in the stomatognathic system and can be combined with other clinical skills to correct dysfunction. Malocclusion is always associated with altered cervical neuromuscular function and postural mechanics, leading to neck problems such as cervical subluxation or fixation.^[5]

The employment of a dental device, or more precisely, a mandibular orthopaedic repositioning appliance (MORA), was commonly linked with a rise in isometric muscle strength in comparison to biting without a device and biting on a sham appliance.^[6-14]

Incompatible dental materials can trigger chronic inflammations by interacting with the body and other foreign materials. Dentists should check if the dental materials are causing any irritation.

Conclusion

Applied Kinesiology offers dental practitioners various options for expanding their diagnostic and treatment capabilities. It allows the testing of medicinal substances for pain management and post-operative complementary treatment. Successful implementation requires comprehensive training in muscle testing, understanding body systems, knowledge of holistic approaches, and

naturopathy. Future emphasis will be on interdisciplinary communication.

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