
OCCLUSION

Malocclusion. An imbalance in dental occlusion, in many cases, is the underlying cause of musculoskeletal system problems.



Dr Meersseman discovered this relationship between dental occlusion and vertebral position about thirty years ago. Experts in applied kinesiology know about the close relationship between teeth and muscles, because the stomatognathic system (teeth and masticatory structures) is intimately linked to structures of the central nervous system. Thus, when some patients did not respond to chiropractic treatments for problems related to the spine and posture, they began to look elsewhere: first at the feet, then finally at the mouth. It was precisely by rebalancing the occlusal structure that most of the problems were solved, and as a result numerous studies in the field of gnathology were performed.

The nervous system, which coordinates all the activities of the human body and thus also influences the posture, works with a feedback system: each action corresponds to a reaction, and the outgoing messages depend on the incoming ones. So, for example, if the incoming message warns us that one of our hands is touching fire, the outgoing message will activate the muscles to move it away. A similar mechanism regulates all the activities of the human body. Posture depends on the outgoing messages that regulate the function of postural muscles.

But these depend on incoming messages, and half of them come from the stomatognathic system and from the feet. It is therefore easy to deduce that a deviation in the arrangement of the stomatognathic system (malocclusion) will cause a postural problem: if the incoming message is aberrant, the outgoing one will be as well.



When the occlusion is correct, while swallowing the muscles contract asymmetrically, the tongue tightens all the spaces not closed by the teeth, all teeth meet up, and the two arches coincide symmetrically. When this happens, the sensory input is correct and does not create deviations in the arrangement of the vertebrae.

Occlusal problems can therefore be the cause of vertebral subluxations which are corrected by chiropractors. But in cases where there is a problem of dental malocclusion, these subluxations can recur frequently, and with them the accompanying symptoms. It is therefore fundamentally important to establish, from the first visit, if a problem of dental occlusion is at the root of the patient's problems, and proceed to the removal of it, in order to offer a lasting solution and not a temporary fix.

The Meersseman test was born from the studies on the relationship between occlusion and posture, allowing us to identify a possible breakdown at the level of the stomatognathic system. The most common causes of dental malocclusion are the lack of teeth, open or deep bites, orthodontics, bridges, and overbites. They can cause deviation of the jaw, premature contacts, and changes in the vertical dimension. When swallowing, these deviations will change the arrangement of the vertebrae; if we consider that a person swallows on average 800 times a day, even during sleep, we understand the importance that such processes can have on the delicate postural balance.

For this reason, during the first visit, any chewing problems, trauma to the mandibular area, and orthodontic interventions are taken into consideration, and the Meersseman test is performed. In the event that the results are positive, we advise patients to remove the occlusion problem before proceeding with chiropractic treatment.
