

CONNATE TOOTH IN A NEONATAL CHIMPANZEE

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Periodontal Disease: Clinician's Point of View

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I have read with interest and some confusion the thoughts of Clark (1993). I understand that he believes that localized periodontal disease originates in the tooth (pp. 2,3).

The view taught in American dental schools today is that, although periodontal disease is bacterial in origin, the bacterial invasion is presented from outside the tooth in the oral environment, and not the opposite (La Zare, 1967; Glickman, 1974; Klavan, et al., 1977; Schluger, et al., 1978; and Grant, et al., 1979). Let me briefly describe the prevailing view of periodontal disease as I explain it to my patients:

Mrs. Jones, I notice that you have bleeding gums. This is evidence of a very common infection called gingivitis. Eighty percent of our population has this gum disease. It is caused by germs floating in every person's saliva. These germs form a colony called plaque which is attached to the teeth and gums. If plaque is allowed to remain on your teeth and gums, the germs produce damaging acid which causes the gums to become inflamed and bleed. As time passes, the damage progresses and the supporting bone begins to melt away from the surrounding teeth. Dentists call this stage of infection periodontitis. The condition of periodontitis is treated by removal of the bacterial invaders and deposits from the surface of the teeth and exposed root surfaces.

If localized periodontitis were caused by disease of the tooth, then we should see many more aching teeth. Indeed, we often treat periodontal disease and see no pupal problems at all.

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News of Dental Anthropology Association Members

M. Yasar Iscan, Florida Atlantic University, organized two symposia on skeletal biology (with **Susan Loth**, Florida Atlantic University) and forensic anthropology (**Erksin Gulec**, University of Ankara) and presented two papers at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, held in Mexico City, Mexico. **Christy G. Turner**, **Antonia Marcsik**, and **Alexander Zubov** also participated in the congress.

On September 8, **Iscan** also presented the opening lecture "Forensic Anthropology" at the Italian Anthropological Society meeting held in Pisa. Two weeks earlier, from August 22-28, **Iscan** served as the invited chairman of a special symposium on Craniofacial Identification at the International Association of Forensic Sciences Meeting, Dusseldorf, Germany. At that meeting he presented papers, one of which dealt with the comparison of human face in photographs.

Iscan and R. Helmer are editors of a new book which should be available from John Wiley and Sons, New York, in mid-October. Entitled *Forensic Analysis of the Skull: Craniofacial Analysis, Reconstruction*