

# The Emerging Specialty of Oral Medicine

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Within the field of dental medicine, there is a specialty called oral medicine. This field, which is frequently seen as being at the nexus of medical and dentistry, is now essential to both pre- and postdoctoral dental education. Most of the globe recognises oral medicine as a dental speciality, and it is currently an emerging field. In the past, oral medicine was not clearly defined by a group of experts. Recent research investigations on clinical practise and worldwide postgraduate programmes in oral medicine have contributed to clarify information about oral medicine from a variety of angles. The definition of oral medicine will be examined in this article along with a revised definition based on current research, which will be presented.

Dental schools have recently created educational criteria that must be followed in order for the institutions to receive accreditation; some of these standards have a direct connection to oral medicine. [1] Curriculum recommendations have been made for postdoctoral training programmes in oral medicine. [1, 2] Recent requirements for advanced general dentistry and oral medicine have been approved by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), with which all accredited training institutions must comply. [3]

**Keywords:** dental education, oral medicine, clinical education, clinical practice, graduate dental education

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The work of Dr. Lester Burket is mainly attributed with the development of oral medicine as a distinct field of study. 1 From 1951 to 1972, Dr. Burket presided as dean of the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Dental Medicine. Many people regard him to be the founder of oral medicine and the author of the foundational textbook by the same name. Since then, dental school curricula all around the world, including those, have been completely integrated with oral medicine as a focused topic of study.[2] It is obvious that there are recently discovered relationships between dental health and systemic health, as well as awareness of the potential effects of oral health on systemic illnesses. [3-5]

Despite being a recognised specialty in many nations, oral medicine is still a relatively new field of study. According to a recent international survey, oral medicine is a recognised

specialty, a separate field of study, or is actively developing in thirty-three of the thirty-seven nations that responded to the survey (89 percent). [6] This article defines oral medicine based on current evaluations of the range of postdoctoral training and clinical practise around the world. It then gives a review of the literature supporting oral medicine as a developing speciality.

## 2. DISCUSSION

What is the definition of oral medicine, which is the question we are aiming to answer? Based on the amount of clinical specialisation required by the training in that field, oral medicine can and should be defined. Two publications that look into both international postgraduate training standards and the clinical practise of oral medicine were recently published. [6, 7] We can identify this developing speciality with this level of expertise because the fundamental concept of oral medicine rests at the junction of these subjects. Educators and practitioners from a number of nations were polled as part of a recent international study to learn their opinions on postgraduate oral medicine training as a separate field of study. [8] The study's findings revealed significant congruence in the content of oral medicine courses while responding to questions about it. This study offered the first international evidence for postgraduate training in oral medicine. In this study, a number of nations declared that postgraduate oral medicine was a separate discipline of study. [9] Twenty people were surveyed, and twenty percent of them said they judged someone's proficiency in the diagnosis and treatment of oral mucosal illnesses. Additionally, 95% of respondents evaluated their ability to diagnose and treat problems of the salivary glands.

At least 70% of respondents noted that oral medicine training to the level of competence included, in addition to the things already mentioned, the diagnosis and management of orofacial pain disorders, oral pathology, laboratory medicine pertinent to oral diseases, general medicine pertinent to oral diseases, advanced radiological assessment (appropriate ordering and interpretation), diagnosis and management of oral chemosensory disorders, and the dental management of oral diseases. Respondents from nations where oral medicine is a recognised specialty as well as regions where oral medicine training is a separate field of study were included in this study. International oral medicine clinical practise was studied and analysed in a different recently published study.[10] It's interesting that the data showed that the training detailed in the prior study's study parallels the extent of oral medical practise.[6] We questioned oral medicine practitioners how much of their clinical time was spent identifying and treating patients with particular mouth diseases.

The definition of oral medicine included therapy of oral mucosal illnesses, salivary dysfunction, mouth symptoms of systemic ailments (dermatoses, HIV, gastrointestinal, and rheumatologic disorders), and facial pain for almost 90% of the responders. Additionally, the majority of responders said that oral mucosal lesions, orofacial discomfort, and care of oral manifestations associated to systemic dermatoses were the most frequent types of oral medicine disorders treated. In addition to diagnosing and treating a wide range of conditions of the maxillofacial complex and oral cavity, such as temporomandibular disorders, salivary gland disorders, xerostomia, and oral complications of cancer treatments, oral medicine practitioners may also offer dental care to patients with complex medical issues.

## 3. CONCLUSION

The definition of oral medicine has been condensed based on data from recent worldwide studies that looked at both clinical practise and postgraduate training in the field. Therefore, we propose that the term "oral medicine" be used to refer to the area of dentistry that deals with providing oral health care to medically complex patients. This includes the diagnosis, primary nonsurgical treatment, and/or management of medically related conditions that affect the oral and maxillofacial region. We further urge that serious thought be given to change the name of the subject from oral medicine to oral and maxillofacial medicine due to the scope and depth of this field.

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