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Helping Hands: A Trismus Appliance for Patients with Restricted Hand Movement

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Background:

Great Ormond Street Hospital treats Epidermolysis Bullosa patients who have limited mouth opening and restricted hand movement. Eating, speech, oral hygiene and dental treatment are all compromised as a result.

Objectives:

A trismus screw is a simple appliance that allows the patient to expand their own mouth opening, but the handle of current models was not suitable for someone with restricted movement in their hands.

Methods:

After multidisciplinary discussion between myself in the dental laboratory, a paediatric dental consultant, an occupational therapist and two dermatologists, a modified version of the appliance with a larger handle was designed and manufactured. This new appliance was given to six patients who had used the previous design. They were later sent a feedback questionnaire.

Results:

Three patients responded. All preferred the new design, found it easier to use, and benefited from increased mouth-opening.

Conclusion:

I can extrapolate that the redesign was a success. The next stage is to expand the study to widen the scope of patients and enable it to become a global solution for the treatment of trismus.

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