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Redefining Centric Relation

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Abstract

Centric relation (CR) has been the most controversial concept of dentistry in general and Prosthodontics in particular. Most of the controversies pertain to its definition and more specifically the position of head of the condyle in the glenoid fossa when the mandible is in CR position.

For more than six decades, it was believed that the condyles assumed the most retruded position in the glenoid fossae in CR. Advancements in diagnostic aids in the past two decades have improved our understanding that the condyles are in fact in the most anterior and superior position in their respective fossae during CR.

The definition of CR has been changing repeatedly and till date there does not seem to have any consensus about it in the literature as Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms (GPT – 8) continues to give as many as seven definitions for CR. The most recent and widely accepted definition of CR refers too many clinically invisible parts while recording CR. It is extremely difficult to follow this convoluted CR definition in clinical practice.

Ironically, even though the previous and existing CR definitions are diametrically opposite pertaining to the position of the head of the condyle, the methods to clinically record CR have remained the same.

The focus of my presentation is to propose a simple definition of CR, which is easy to understand, clinically applicable and is practical in its approach by eliminating its references to various invisible parts. Clinicians will then be able to confidently record CR with better understanding of its concepts, which will in turn be very helpful in planning several treatment procedures with better accuracy.

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