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Impact and clinical significance of changes in salivary flow on quality of life in Sjogren's syndrome

Recipient of 2009 Student Fellowship Award

Lay Abstract:

Sjogren's syndrome has a major impact on the ability to perform daily activities. Dry mouth in particular can affect speech, chewing, and social involvement. The association between dry mouth and quality of life has recently been published in studies looking at patients at one point in time. We hypothesize in this six month project that progressive (increase or decrease) changes in salivary flow are related to changes in general and mouth-related quality of life. In addition, we will assess the amount of improvement in salivary flow that patients consider to offer significant relief.

Scientific Abstract:

Sjogren's syndrome (SS) is an autoimmune disease characterized by the destruction and dysfunction of exocrine glands. Significant complications in SS include xerostomia and keratoconjunctivitis sicca. Xerostomia has been correlated to general quality of life (QOL) and oral health related quality of life (OHQOL) in cross-sectional and retrospective studies. This protocol tests prospectively the hypothesis that longitudinal variation in salivary flow induced by pharmacologic therapy is associated with changes in QOL and OHQO. A secondary aim is the assessment of clinically significant changes in salivary flow using subject-centered measures. The utility of estimating the size of this effect is its potential application (as outcome) to future studies evaluating therapy for xerostomia.