

Abstract

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Serum nutrient deficiencies in the patient with complex temporomandibular joint problems.

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OBJECTIVE: This study evaluated serum nutrients in 23 patients who had previous Proplast/Teflon implants to their temporomandibular joints (TMJ) and continued to remain in chronic, severe, irresolvable pain despite subsequent surgical reconstruction.

PATIENTS: All of the patients were women, and their average age was 40.6 years (range, 28-55 years).

METHODS: Standard blood assays were performed for beta-carotene (vitamin A), folate, serum iron, ferritin, zinc, magnesium, and vitamins B1, B6, B12, and C.

RESULTS: Each patient was deficient in at least one of these 10 elements, with an average of 3.3 elements. Some factors that may be responsible for the deficiency state include inadequate nutritional intake, malabsorption, utilization dysfunction, increased requirements, or drug interactions. In conclusion, the patient who has had multiple, complex TMJ operations with a history of TMJ Proplast/Teflon implants and poor treatment results may be suffering from an unrecognized malnutrition state, substantially adding to the patient's morbidity.

CONCLUSION: Nutritional evaluations, dietary counseling, and appropriate medical management may improve the treatment outcomes for these patients.

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