

Dentofacial Orthopedics

Henry García Guevara^{1,2*}¹Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Hospital Santa Paula, Sao Paulo Brazil²Faculty at the Oral Surgery Department, Santa Maria University, Caracas, Venezuela

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*Corresponding author

Henry García Guevara, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Hospital Santa Paula, Sao Paulo Brazil, Faculty at the Oral Surgery Department, Santa Maria University, Caracas, Venezuela, Email: henryagg@gmail.com

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Based on the American Dental Association concept, Dentofacial Orthopedics is the branch of dentistry that has to do with the assessment, development and alignment of maxilla, mandible, and other cranial bones, with attendant improvement in airway, muscle and neurological tone. Though most often done in the course of orthodontic treatment, it is also done for other reasons (i.e. Sleep, Apnea, TMJ dysfunction, athletic enhancement, and to remedy some medical conditions). A respectable minority of dental practitioners believes that when done properly, it offers substantial health benefits in that it improves systemic muscle, neurological, and endocrine function. Dental orthopedic treatment is typically done with functional appliances. It is known by various other names: dentofacial orthopedics, cranio-mandibular orthopedics, gnathological orthopedics and jaw orthopedics.

Several scientific organizations such as the American Association of Orthodontists and Dentofacial Orthopedics, and American Orthodontic Society, American Academy of Gnathological Orthopedics and the International College of Cranio-mandibular Orthopedics, around the world are focused on the studied of this area of the Cranial Development.

When browsing the internet looking for Health specialists, who are able to solve our specific problems, we find different doctors with degrees in medical areas as well as in the fields of oral region.

Surely you may have noticed how some doctors specialized in Orthodontics and Dentofacial (Oral) Orthopedics [1], despite the term orthodontics is more popularly known, few patients reported having heard the title or Oral or Dentofacial Orthopedics.

Each specialist in any area starts his or her training in schools of dentistry or medicine. At the end of the dental school specifically, many opt for specialized studies, which requires additional studies of specific programs that can last several years. Between 9 Specialties recognized by the American Dental Association is: Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, yet in other locations around the world can be found as separate specialties, being very common to find Orthopedics Oral or Dentofacial Orthopedics specialists.

While orthodontics involves the management and study of tooth movement and teeth-skeletal structure relationship, dentofacial orthopedics involves the orientation of facial growth and development, which mainly occurs during childhood. The Dentofacial Orthopedist uses different devices of different shapes and functions, such as maxillary expansion devices for the correction of dental/facial deformities that the patients may present. Sometimes the oral orthopedic treatment may precede the conventional orthodontic devices, but often the two are used simultaneously. So if your child gets braces and lingual position correctors, he or she has been subjected to a combined orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics treatment.

This specialty diagnosed, guide and correct the lack of balance between teeth jaws and the facial structure, and can design a treatments plans that integrate different specialties, such as the Oral and Maxillofacial surgeon [2], who is responsible for greater dentofacial corrections that cannot be resolved with conventional orthopedic devices, or when the patient presents specific conditions such as older ages and changes in the quality of the facial tissues. This case requires combined surgical and orthopedic treatments to achieve satisfactory results and improved the facial health of our patients [3].

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