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Application Analysis of Micro-implant Anchorage Technology in Orthodontics

Sijun Meng

School & Hospital of Stomatology, School of Medicine, Foshan University, Foshan 528099, Guangdong, China

Abstract: The core goal of orthodontic treatment is to realize physiological movement of dentition and jaw bones as well as reconstruction of occlusal relationship through reasonable mechanical regulation, while anchorage control is a key link that guarantees orthodontic effects and determines the success rate of treatment. As a new type of osseous anchorage technology, micro-implant anchorage technology effectively makes up for the shortcomings of traditional anchorage technologies by virtue of unique advantages including osseous retention, minimally invasive implantation, strong independence and excellent aesthetics, and has been widely applied in various orthodontic diagnosis and treatment scenarios. Based on this, this paper analyzes the existing problems of traditional orthodontic anchorage technologies, systematically elaborates the clinical application advantages of micro-implant anchorage technology, and proposes targeted optimization countermeasures for its application combined with clinical diagnosis and treatment standards. It aims to provide a theoretical reference for improving the quality of orthodontic treatment and standardizing the clinical application of micro-implant anchorage technology, and to promote the refined and standardized development of orthodontic diagnosis and treatment technologies.

Keywords: Orthodontics; Micro-implant; Anchorage technology; Clinical application

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1. Introduction

With the improvement of public awareness of oral health and upgrading of aesthetic demands, orthodontics is no longer limited to correcting dental deformities and improving occlusal functions, but also considers facial beauty. Meanwhile, the complexity of clinical orthodontic cases keeps rising. Anchorage serves as the core foundation that bears orthodontic force, resists abnormal tooth movement, and ensures precise displacement of target teeth in orthodontic treatment. The accuracy and stability of anchorage control directly determine the efficiency, therapeutic effect, and prognosis of orthodontic treatment. Micro-implant anchorage technology marks an important breakthrough in modern minimally invasive orthodontics. Different from traditional soft tissue and dental anchorage, this technology forms osseous anchorage by implanting micro-

implants into jaw bones. It can independently provide stable and continuous orthodontic force, completely break away from patients' compliance dependence on traditional anchorage, and also features minimal invasion, good appearance, and wide adaptability [1]. Therefore, exploring the application strategies of micro-implant anchorage technology in orthodontics bears great significance.

2. Existing problems of traditional orthodontic anchorage technologies

2.1. Insufficient anchorage stability

Traditional orthodontic anchorage is divided into dental anchorage and soft tissue anchorage, both of which have inherent stability defects and cannot realize precise mechanical control. Dental anchorage takes healthy intraoral teeth as anchorage carriers and counteracts orthodontic force through interaction of adjacent and opposite teeth. However, it is essentially elastic anchorage. Under continuous orthodontic force, the anchorage teeth are prone to passive displacement, tilting, or rotation, resulting in anchorage loss [2]. Soft tissue anchorage relies on the binding force of oral soft tissues such as lips, cheeks, and tongue to provide anchorage with poorer stability. The muscle tension of oral soft tissues changes dynamically; daily chewing, speaking, and swallowing will alter the stress state of soft tissues, leading to fluctuating orthodontic force and failure to maintain constant orthodontic effect [3].

2.2. Reliance on patients' compliance

Most traditional orthodontic anchorage devices rely on active patient cooperation to function, which constitutes the primary human factor contributing to the aforementioned treatment failures or adverse outcomes. Examples such as facebows, headgears, and elastic chain tractions operate on this premise: patients must wear them for a specified duration each day and strictly follow medical instructions to avoid arbitrary removal. Nevertheless, in clinical practice, most patients, especially younger ones, fail to wear the appliances properly and consistently due to study, work, daily life, social interactions, and other commitments, frequently resulting in insufficient wear time, improper wearing techniques, and self-discontinuation of treatment [4]. Additionally, some patients lack cooperation due to personal concerns, including discomfort and cosmetic worries, which limits the efficacy of anchorage.

2.3. Poor aesthetics and comfort

The structural design of traditional orthodontic anchorage devices is relatively crude, with obvious aesthetic flaws and poor comfort, making them difficult to meet the treatment demands of modern patients. Extraoral anchorage appliances such as headgears and facebows are exposed outside the face and highly visible, which severely compromise patients' facial appearance. This tends to impose social and psychological pressure on patients, especially adolescents and young adults, and may even trigger feelings of inferiority and resistance to treatment. In terms of comfort, traditional anchorage devices alter the original anatomical space and stress distribution of the oral cavity. After wearing them, most patients experience prominent foreign body sensations, masticatory discomfort, and speech disorders. Some appliances also restrict mouth opening range and facial muscle movement, interfering with patients' routine physiological activities including eating and speaking [5].

3. Application advantages of micro-implant anchorage technology in orthodontics

3.1. High stability of osseous anchorage

The core advantage of micro-implant anchorage technology lies in constructing a stable osseous anchorage system, fundamentally solving the insufficient stability of traditional anchorage. Minimally invasive titanium alloy micro-implants are placed into alveolar and jaw bones. The implants are tightly fixed to bone tissues through osseointegration to form rigid anchorage, which can bear sustained and stable orthodontic force without tooth displacement/tilting of dental anchorage or force fluctuation of soft tissue anchorage. The mechanical transmission of osseous anchorage is precise and uniform. It can realize multi-dimensional and multi-directional regulation of orthodontic force according to clinical needs, and accurately complete complex treatments such as large-scale retraction of anterior teeth, intrusion and up-righting of molars, asymmetric dentition correction, and fine adjustment of skeletal malocclusion [6].

3.2. No dependence on patients' compliance

Micro-implant anchorage is a built-in fixed anchorage system, representing an important innovation that eliminates dependence on patients' compliance. After implantation, implants are fixed inside the jawbone without daily wearing or adjustment. Its anchorage function will not be affected by patients' daily behaviors or subjective willingness. No matter what daily activities and social scenarios patients are in, the anchorage system can function sustainably and stably, completely avoiding treatment stagnation and effect deviation caused by non-standard wearing, insufficient duration, or self-removal. This advantage is particularly prominent among adolescent patients, effectively solving the clinical difficulty of poor compliance and greatly improving the controllability and stability of orthodontic treatment [7].

3.3. Minimally invasive, aesthetic and comfortable

Micro-implant anchorage technology features minimal invasiveness, good aesthetics, and high comfort, which perfectly matches the refined and humanized diagnosis and treatment concepts of modern orthodontics. In terms of trauma, micro-implants are small in size, making their implantation and surgical procedures simple and convenient with tiny wounds. There is no need for extensive mucosal resection or bone splitting, resulting in minor surgical trauma. Patients experience little postoperative bleeding, mild inflammation, and slight pain, accompanied by a short recovery period without impairment of normal oral functions. The implants can be removed in a minimally invasive manner after orthodontic treatment without leaving obvious scars [8]. Aesthetically, micro-implants are embedded in the alveolar bone and completely concealed inside the oral cavity with no exposed appliances, so they have no adverse impact on patients' facial appearance. This addresses the aesthetic drawbacks of conventional external anchorage devices and meets patients' social demands throughout orthodontic treatment. In terms of comfort, buried micro-implants do not contact or irritate the oral mucosa, causing no foreign body sensation in the mouth and leaving patients' daily routines such as eating, speaking, and swallowing unaffected. Meanwhile, their simple structure without complex lumens facilitates patients' daily oral hygiene maintenance, effectively preventing the accumulation of bacterial plaque and food debris. It also slows down the progression of oral diseases and reduces the incidence of complications including infections and dental caries, greatly improving patients' overall medical experience [9].

4. Application countermeasures of micro-implant anchorage technology in orthodontics

4.1. Improve preoperative evaluation and formulate precise implantation plans

Accurate preoperative assessment and scientific planning serve as the core prerequisite for avoiding risks in mini-implant placement and ensuring anchorage efficacy, and a standardized and refined preoperative assessment system must be established in clinical practice. First of all, comprehensive oral examinations shall be conducted. Clinicians shall conduct a detailed assessment of the patient's dentition, including examinations of tooth alignment, occlusal conditions, and periodontal health, as well as screening for underlying oral diseases such as gingivitis and periodontitis. If such diseases are detected, anti-inflammatory treatment shall be administered first, and mini-implant placement can only be performed once the oral environment meets the standards to reduce postoperative complications such as infection [10]. Second, alveolar bone conditions shall be evaluated via imaging examinations. Clinicians shall carry out imaging tests to obtain clear data on bone density, bone height, and bone thickness at the implantation site, and analyze anatomical structures including tooth roots, maxillary sinuses, and inferior alveolar nerves. Treatment plans shall be formulated according to the patient's specific malocclusion and orthodontic goals, with clear definition of implantation site, angle, and depth, as well as the force direction and magnitude of anchorage, so as to develop individualized protocols and maximize the anchorage function of implants. Finally, a thorough assessment of the patient's general physical status shall be completed. To optimize subsequent treatment outcomes, clinicians shall test the patient's systemic indicators, including coagulation function, immune disorders, and medication history, analyze the impacts of various factors on wound healing and osseointegration, and develop differentiated postoperative care plans tailored to individual conditions to facilitate the patient's early recovery [11].

4.2. Standardize intraoperative procedures and strictly control clinical risks

Standardized intraoperative procedures are critical to ensuring the stability of mini-implants and avoiding surgical complications. Clinicians must strictly standardize operating workflows to improve operational precision. First, the principle of aseptic technique must be followed. During surgery, clinical staff shall thoroughly disinfect the oral surgical site and surgical instruments to create a favorable surgical environment. Surgeons shall perform implantation strictly in accordance with the surgical plan, control the implantation force and speed properly, and prevent issues such as bone tissue damage and implant displacement. Clinicians should adopt differentiated operational approaches based on the bone characteristics of each site. For instance, drilling pilot holes first can reduce implantation difficulty at sites with sufficient bone volume, while precise control of implantation depth is required at sites with insufficient bone volume to prevent damage to adjacent structures [12]. After implantation, the fixation, sealing, and positioning of the implant shall be inspected. Debridement can only be carried out after confirming no implant loosening, displacement, or compression of surrounding tissues. The patient's condition shall be monitored continuously, and potential adverse events (e.g., hemorrhage, pain) shall be managed promptly to guarantee safe and smooth surgery. Meanwhile, specialized technical training for surgeons should be strengthened to help them master key operational points of mini-implant anchorage techniques, methods to avoid anatomical injuries, and coordinated operation plans tailored to various cases. This can prevent surgical failures caused by improper manipulation and inadequate technical proficiency, as well as enhance the overall accuracy and safety of the entire surgical procedure [13].

4.3. Strengthen postoperative nursing and follow-up to optimize full-course treatment management

Postoperative care and long-term follow-up management are critical to ensuring implant stability, extending the service life of anchorage devices, and securing orthodontic outcomes, which necessitates the establishment of a systematic postoperative management mechanism. First, promptly inform patients of key care points. Physicians shall guide patients to perform standardized oral hygiene cleaning to keep the surgical site clean and free of contamination. Meanwhile, patients should minimize occlusal contact with the surgical area in the short term to reduce irritation to the oral mucosa and the risk of infection caused by accumulated food residues. Medications shall be administered in strict accordance with medication guidelines. Routine medication is unnecessary for patients with small wounds free of swelling or infection risks. For those presenting swelling or mild inflammation, appropriate anti-inflammatory and diuretic detumescent drugs may be prescribed to accelerate wound healing [14]. Second, establish a regular postoperative follow-up system. Medical institutions shall arrange review and follow-up visits at different time intervals. Early postoperative reviews focus on incision healing, implant stability, infection, inflammation, swelling, pain, and other conditions to address potential risks in a timely manner. Mid-term reviews evaluate the supporting function of implants and bone movement, with real-time adjustments to the magnitude and direction of orthodontic force based on treatment progress. This ensures effective implementation of orthodontic plans and prevents implant loosening, bone resorption, and other complications resulting from prolonged inappropriate stress. Follow-up visits after orthodontic treatment completion shall verify whether teeth have reached the ideal alignment. Once orthodontic goals are achieved, minimally invasive implant removal shall be performed immediately, followed by secondary wound management and care. Third, deliver comprehensive health education to patients. Medical institutions shall inform patients of postoperative precautions and self-examination methods to improve their self-care capabilities, and remind them to attend regular reviews and complete full-cycle treatment monitoring as instructed. For patients receiving clear aligner therapy combined with implant anchorage, wearing protocols and treatment plans shall be optimized simultaneously. Stable anchorage and precise tooth movement can be achieved through such measures, leading to favorable overall treatment results [15].

5. Conclusion

Compared with traditional orthodontic anchorage technologies, micro-implant anchorage technology boasts prominent advantages in stability, adaptability, aesthetics, and comfort. It effectively breaks the clinical limitations of traditional anchorage and can be widely applied in routine and complex orthodontic cases, greatly improving orthodontic precision and treatment quality while optimizing patients' medical experience. It marks an important achievement in modern orthodontics. In clinical practice, medical staff shall fully optimize the whole technical process through refined preoperative personalized evaluation, standardized intraoperative operations, and full-cycle postoperative follow-up, so as to avoid hidden clinical risks. With continuous advancement of orthodontic technologies, micro-implant anchorage technology will further develop toward refinement, minimal invasion, and personalization, and exert greater value in orthodontic treatment.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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