



TMD: THE GREAT IMPOSTER

Chronic recurrent headaches as well as facial and neck pain are a common occurrence in millions of Americans. In addition, people frequently suffer from ear symptoms including pain, ringing, buzzing, loss of hearing or clicking or locking of the jaw which can make chewing, speaking or moving the jaw painful or difficult.

Until recently these symptoms, appearing unrelated, were frequently undiagnosed or misdiagnosed as migraine, tension headache, neuritis, neuralgia, or stress. When standard treatment remedies for these types of disorders proved unsuccessful, patients were frequently labeled as hypochondriacs, "it's all in your head", or neurotic.

Today, it is well recognized by certain practitioners within the Health Care Community that these often unexplained, undiagnosed and therefore untreated symptoms are related to a group of problems called, Temporomandibular Disorders (TMD).

Today, practitioners with proper training and diagnostic skills, are able to pin point the cause of these symptoms and provide, often times seemingly miraculous, relief of symptoms which may have been present for years.

If you suffer from one or all of these symptoms, this web site has help for you. The American Academy of Craniofacial Pain desires to provide you with information about your disorder and help guide you in the selection of a health care professional who has received advanced training in the diagnosis and treatment of head, neck, craniofacial pain and temporomandibular joint disorders.

A CLOSER LOOK AT TMD

A question that is frequently asked is what exactly is TMD? TMD or Temporomandibular Disorders are a group of maladies which can effect the temporomandibular joints (the jaw joints located immediatel in front of your ears) , as well as the associated muscles of the jaw, face and neck as well as related neurological and vascular structures.

Problems within this complex can produce a myriad of symptoms which, at first glance, might appear to be totally unrelated to the jaw complex. These symptoms can include headaches (over the eye, in the temples, behind the eyes, and at the base of the skull), generalized facial pain as well as more specific pain directly in front of the ears, ear symptoms including ringing, buzzing, congestion, as well as pain. In

addition neck and shoulder pain as well as clicking or grating noises of the jaw joint with movement, locking of the jaw or pain in the jaw with function are frequently encountered. Sufferers may not possess all of these symptoms however, it is most certainly possible that they may.

Some estimates would suggest that as high as 20% of the American population possess one or more of the symptoms of a temporomandibular disorder. Although all of these individuals may not have conditions severe enough to warrant treatment, many sufferers have developed such debilitating pain so as to degrade the quality of their life making family, social and business interrelationships difficult if not impossible.

If you are a sufferer or know someone who is, feel free to contact the American Academy of Craniofacial Pain or any of the members listed in our [Referral Area](#) for further information. Members of the Academy have all demonstrated a high degree of interest in dealing with these types of disorders and have taken sufficient [advanced training](#) so as to have achieved certification by the Academy.