

# DENTAL CARE OF A CHILD WITH CLEFT LIP AND PALATE — ACHIEVING OPTIMAL AESTHETICS & FUNCTION

**Rakesh Malhotra**

New Delhi, India

**C**left lip and palate represent the most common facial birth defect, with an incidence of approximately 1 in 750 births. Clefts of the lip & palate are associated with many problems including cosmetic and dental abnormalities, impaired speech, hearing and facial growth difficulties. In addition, there is a huge psychological trauma on the child & the parents. The parents of these unfortunate children search eagerly for some way to alleviate the mental anguish and distortion of personality, the facial deformity, malocclusion and the pathetic functional inadequacy that exists. The World Health Organization considers oral clefts a significant public health problem, both in terms of medical and economic burdens for affected individuals and their families.

The management of Cleft Lip & Palate patients is a challenge due to the inherent complexity & multiplicity of associated problems. A dedicated team of medical & dental specialists is essential to achieve a functionally optimal & aesthetically acceptable treatment outcome. Dental & Orthodontic treatment form an important part of the management of such cases & are integral to achieving the 3 main oral health goals – the patient must look well, eat well & speak well. It is important that repairs of cleft lip & palate are done at the proper time as far as the child's growth & development is concerned and therefore a well-established protocol of treatment needs to be adhered to. This presentation will highlight the nuances of cleft care and the important role of the various specialties in dentistry in effective rehabilitation of such patients with detailed presentation of cases treated by the speaker over a span of three decades.

[advancedentistry@hotmail.com](mailto:advancedentistry@hotmail.com)