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## Identifying orofacial myofunctional disorders and the significance of orofacial myofunctional therapy

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Orofacial Myofunctional Disorders (OMD'S) are behaviors and patterns created by inappropriate muscle function and incorrect habits involving the tongue, lips, jaw and face. They play a major role in an individual's total wellness. Most medical and dental professionals do not realize the huge negative impact that they have on one's life. This lecture will teach attendees to immediately identify OMD's among their patients' so that they can help them reach optimum function and health through collaboration with other healthcare providers. They will also learn many factors that cause OMD's to develop and how to prevent them from occurring it. Orofacial myofunctional therapy is the re-education and re-patterning of the oral and facial muscles. Therapy includes facial and tongue exercises and behavior modification techniques to promote proper tongue position, improved breathing, chewing and swallowing. Treatment usually consists of a regular program of exercises over a 6 to 12 months period, although treatment length may vary. Researchers examining various populations found that 38% have orofacial myofunctional disorders and an incidence of 81% have been found in children exhibiting speech/articulation problems. Myofunctional therapy has helped literally thousands of individuals, in dozens of countries, for over 30 years. Myofunctional therapists collaborate with dentists, oral surgeons, orthodontists, ENT's, pediatricians, sleep doctors, psychiatrists and chiropractors. They specialize in teaching people how to breathe, chew and swallow properly. Myofunctional therapists' role includes the roles of dentist, dental hygienist and speech pathologist. There is a shortage of myofunctional therapists and as this form of therapy is picking up speed more and more research becomes available.

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