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Rehabilitation of cleft lip and palate patients achieving optimal aesthetics and function

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Clefts of the lip and palate represent the most common facial birth defect with an incidence of 1 in 750 births. They are associated with many problems including cosmetic and dental abnormalities, impaired speech, hearing and facial growth. In addition, there is a huge psychological trauma on the child and the parents. The parents of such unfortunate children search eagerly for some way to alleviate the mental anguish and distortion of personality, the facial deformity, malocclusion and the functional inadequacy that exists. The WHO 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 and palate patients is a challenge due to the inherent complexity and multiplicity of associated problems. A dedicated team of medical and dental specialists is essential to achieve a satisfactory treatment outcome. Dental and orthodontic treatment form an important part of the management of such cases and are integral in achieving the three main oral health goals and the patient must look well, eat well and speak well. This presentation will highlight the nuances of cleft care and the important role of the various specialties of dentistry in effective rehabilitation of such patients with detailed presentation of cases treated by the speaker over a span of three decades.

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