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Original Article

Opinions of American and Swedish Orthodontists about the Role of Erupting Third Molars as a Cause of Dental Crowding

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Abstract

Objective: To compare the opinions of Swedish orthodontists and American orthodontists regarding the association between third molar eruption and dental crowding.

Materials and Methods: A survey was distributed to Swedish orthodontists (n = 230) asking their views on the force exerted by erupting third molars, its relationship to crowding, and their recommendations for prophylactic removal. Results were compared with those from a similar study conducted in the United States. Chi square analysis was used to determine differences in responses to questions between Swedish and American orthodontists. $P \leq .05$ was considered significant.

Results: Both Swedish and American orthodontists believed that lower third molars were more likely than upper third molars to cause force (65% and 58% for Swedish and American orthodontists, respectively) and crowding (42% and 40%, respectively). No statistically significant differences were seen between the answers of American and Swedish orthodontists regarding the role of upper and lower third molars in causing crowding. Although only 18% of Swedish orthodontists "generally" or "sometimes" recommended prophylactic removal of mandibular third molars, 36% of American orthodontists "generally" or "sometimes" recommended removal ($P < .0001$).

Conclusions: Most orthodontists in the United States and Sweden do believe that erupting lower third molars exert an anterior force; however, they also believe that these teeth "rarely" or "never" cause crowding of the dentition. The reason that more American orthodontists recommend prophylactic removal of mandibular third molars remains unexplained.

Keywords: [Third molars](#), [Crowding](#), [Anterior forces](#)

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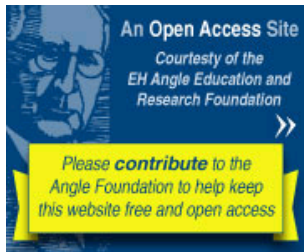
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