Splint Therapy and Clicking


BACKGROUND: Painful clicking of the TMJ is often attributable to a nonreducing meniscus. Patients with this condition are candidates for protrusive splint therapy.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY: To describe the results of anterior repositioning splint therapy for patients with painful clicking.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS: For 51 patients (mean age 31 years) Ramitec registration was used to document the amount of protrusion necessary and was used as a guide in splint construction. Patients were followed for a minimum of 6 months.

RESULTS: The average amount of protrusion required to eliminate the patient's click was 2.7 mm on the affected side and 1.7 mm on the unaffected side. The treatment objective of absence of clicking and sufficiently reduced or eliminated pain was achieved in 45 patients (88.2%). Four of the 6 patients who were not successfully treated underwent surgical intervention. Multiple adhesions in joint spaces were found in all of these patients.

CONCLUSIONS: The authors judge this therapy to be reasonable and will continue to report detailed analysis of signs and symptoms in these patients. However, they caution practitioners to seriously consider the possibility of meniscal displacement progressing to a nonreducing meniscus.