



Periodontal Therapy among Patients with Cardiovascular Disease:

Exploring a Pathway to Lower Medical Spending

[Cardiovascular \(heart\) disease](#) and [periodontal \(gum\) disease](#) are both common long-term health conditions, and they share many of the same risk factors, such as smoking, diabetes, and chronic inflammation. Researchers have long suspected that [poor oral health may be linked to worse heart health](#), but less is known about how dental care relates to health care costs for people with cardiovascular disease.

[This study](#), published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*, examined whether adults who have been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease who received periodontal disease treatment had different medical costs than those who did not receive periodontal treatment. The analysis used commercial insurance claims data from more than 190,000 U.S. adults ages 21 to 64 who were diagnosed with cardiovascular disease. Researchers compared health care costs in 2022 for people who received no periodontal treatment, one to three periodontal visits, or four or more periodontal visits during 2020–2021.

The study found that people who had four or more periodontal visits had lower overall medical costs and lower outpatient medical costs than those who received no periodontal care. People who had one to three periodontal visits had lower prescription drug costs. These differences remained after accounting for factors like age, sex, other health conditions, and place of residence. The largest cost differences were seen among people who received more frequent periodontal care (that is, four or more periodontal visits).

While many studies before this have looked at [periodontal disease as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease](#), this study expands on the current science to demonstrate lower medical costs for individuals who already have cardiovascular disease and receive periodontal treatment. Because those with more periodontal treatments had lower overall and outpatient medical costs, this study supports the idea that dentists should take factors like a patient's cardiovascular disease into account when planning treatment, rather than

taking a “one-size-fits-all” approach to dental care where all patients receive the same treatments on the same schedule. This study uses a novel approach of analyzing combined medical, dental, and pharmacy claims data, which highlights the importance of emphasizing medical-dental integration in research and clinical care.

The findings suggest that consistent periodontal treatment may be associated with lower medical spending among commercially insured adults with cardiovascular disease. One possible explanation is that [treating gum disease may help reduce chronic inflammation](#), which can [play a role in heart disease](#). Another possibility is that people who regularly receive periodontal care may also be more engaged in managing their overall health.

This study does not prove that periodontal treatment causes lower medical costs. It included only adults with commercial medical and dental insurance and did not capture important factors such as income, education, or health behaviors. Still, the results highlight the potential value of integrating oral health care into the management of chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease and suggest that improving access to periodontal care may offer both health and economic benefits.