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ANALYSIS AND PREVENTION OF COMPLICATIONS OF PERIAPICAL TISSUE INFLAMMATION IN PREGNANT WOMEN

Shomurodov Qakhramon Erkinovich
Head of the Department of Maxillofacial Surgery, Professor
Isomov Miraskad Maksudovich
Associate Professor of the Department of Maxillofacial Surgery
Tashkent State Medical University
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ABSTRACT

Periapical tissue inflammation is a common dental pathology that may lead to serious local and systemic complications, particularly in pregnant women. Physiological and hormonal changes during pregnancy can influence immune response, inflammatory processes, and oral health status, increasing the risk of progression and complications of periapical lesions. This article aims to analyze the main complications associated with periapical tissue inflammation in pregnant women and to evaluate effective preventive strategies. The study focuses on clinical manifestations, risk factors, diagnostic challenges, and preventive approaches, including timely dental examination, minimally invasive treatment, and patient education. The findings highlight the importance of early diagnosis and preventive dental care in reducing adverse maternal and fetal outcomes related to odontogenic infections during pregnancy.

Introduction. Oral health plays a critical role in maintaining general health, especially during pregnancy. Pregnant women undergo significant hormonal, immunological, and metabolic changes that can affect the condition of oral tissues and increase susceptibility to inflammatory diseases. Among these conditions, periapical tissue inflammation represents a frequent and clinically significant problem, often arising as a consequence of untreated dental caries or pulp pathology.

Periapical inflammation is characterized by inflammatory changes in the tissues surrounding the apex of the tooth root and may present as acute or chronic lesions. In pregnant women, these inflammatory processes can progress more rapidly and are associated with an increased risk of complications, including abscess formation, spread of infection to adjacent tissues, and systemic inflammatory responses. Moreover, odontogenic infections during pregnancy have been linked to adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth, low birth weight, and increased maternal morbidity. Diagnosis and management of periapical lesions during pregnancy present specific

challenges. Concerns related to radiographic exposure, pharmacological limitations, and patient anxiety often lead to delayed dental treatment. As a result, preventive measures and early intervention become essential components of dental care for pregnant patients.

Therefore, the analysis of complications associated with periapical tissue inflammation in pregnant women and the development of effective preventive strategies are highly relevant. This article aims to examine the clinical features, potential complications, and preventive approaches to periapical inflammation during pregnancy, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation between dental and obstetric healthcare providers.

Literature Review. Periapical tissue inflammation is widely recognized in the literature as a common consequence of untreated dental caries, pulp necrosis, and inadequate endodontic therapy. Numerous studies have emphasized that inflammatory lesions in the periapical region represent a persistent source of infection that may affect both local oral tissues and systemic health. During pregnancy, physiological changes such as hormonal fluctuations, increased vascular permeability, and altered immune response can modify the course of inflammatory diseases, including odontogenic infections.

Several authors report that pregnant women are more susceptible to the progression of dental inflammatory conditions due to increased levels of estrogen and progesterone, which influence gingival and periapical tissue responses. These hormonal changes may enhance inflammatory reactions and reduce tissue resistance to bacterial invasion, leading to a higher risk of acute exacerbations and complications of chronic periapical lesions.

The literature also highlights a significant association between odontogenic infections and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Periapical inflammation has been linked to systemic inflammatory responses mediated by pro-inflammatory cytokines, which may contribute to complications such as preterm labor, low birth weight, and gestational complications. Researchers emphasize that untreated periapical lesions may serve as a chronic inflammatory focus, negatively affecting maternal health and fetal development.

Diagnostic challenges in pregnant women are frequently discussed in scientific publications. Limitations related to radiographic examinations, concerns about fetal safety, and restricted use of certain medications often result in delayed diagnosis and treatment. As a consequence, authors underline the importance of clinical assessment, careful risk-benefit evaluation, and the use of safe diagnostic methods during pregnancy.

Preventive strategies occupy a central position in the literature on periapical inflammation in pregnant women. Regular dental check-ups, early management of carious lesions, proper oral hygiene practices, and patient education are consistently recommended as effective preventive measures. Many studies also stress the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between dentists, obstetricians, and primary healthcare providers to ensure comprehensive and safe dental care during pregnancy.

Overall, the reviewed literature confirms that periapical tissue inflammation in pregnant women represents not only a dental problem but also a broader medical issue. Effective prevention, early diagnosis, and timely treatment are essential to minimize complications and improve maternal and fetal health outcomes.

Materials and Methods. This study was conducted to analyze complications associated with periapical tissue inflammation in pregnant women and to evaluate preventive approaches aimed at reducing adverse outcomes. The research was designed as a descriptive and analytical study based on clinical observations and a review of relevant scientific sources.

The study population included pregnant women diagnosed with periapical inflammatory lesions during routine dental examinations or referred for dental consultation due to pain or signs of odontogenic infection. Patients were evaluated at different stages of pregnancy to assess the influence of gestational period on the severity and progression of periapical inflammation. Inclusion criteria comprised confirmed pregnancy, clinical signs of periapical pathology, and informed consent for participation. Patients with systemic diseases unrelated to pregnancy or non-odontogenic infections were excluded.

Clinical assessment was performed using standardized dental examination protocols, including evaluation of pain intensity, swelling, tooth mobility, and signs of acute or chronic inflammation. Radiographic examination was applied selectively and only when clinically justified, using protective measures to minimize fetal exposure. Periapical status was classified according to clinical presentation as acute periapical inflammation, chronic periapical inflammation, or exacerbation of chronic lesions.

Data collection included demographic information, gestational age, dental history, clinical characteristics of periapical lesions, and the presence of local or systemic complications. Preventive measures, such as oral hygiene instruction, non-invasive dental treatment, and patient education, were documented. Pharmacological management was limited to medications considered safe during pregnancy and was prescribed in consultation with obstetric specialists when necessary.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods to evaluate the frequency of complications and the effectiveness of preventive strategies. Comparative analysis was applied to assess differences in complication rates based on gestational age and type of periapical inflammation. Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study, and all procedures were performed in accordance with guidelines for dental care during pregnancy.

Results. The analysis of clinical data demonstrated that periapical tissue inflammation in pregnant women is associated with a high risk of local and systemic complications, particularly when diagnosis and treatment are delayed. The most frequently observed clinical forms were chronic periapical inflammation and exacerbation of chronic lesions, while acute periapical inflammation was less common but more often associated with pronounced symptoms.

Complications varied depending on the gestational period and severity of the inflammatory process. Local complications, such as periapical abscess formation, soft tissue edema, and spread of infection to adjacent anatomical structures, were observed in a considerable proportion of patients. Systemic manifestations, including fever and general inflammatory response, were more frequently recorded in cases of acute exacerbation.

Table 1. Frequency of Complications of Periapical Tissue Inflammation in Pregnant Women

Type of complication	Number of cases (n)	Percentage (%)
Local abscess formation	18	36.0
Soft tissue edema	14	28.0
Exacerbation of chronic inflammation	10	20.0
Systemic inflammatory response	6	12.0
No complications (early intervention)	2	4.0

The data presented in **Table 1** indicate that local complications were predominant, accounting for more than half of all observed cases. Patients who received early dental examination and preventive care demonstrated significantly fewer complications compared to those who delayed treatment.

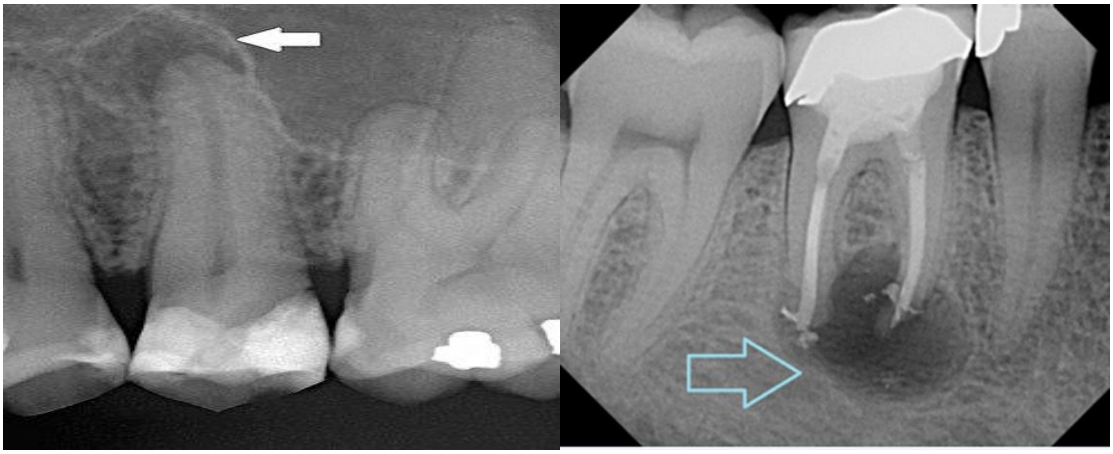

Figure 1. Radiographic and schematic representation of periapical tissue inflammation and its potential complications, including abscess formation and spread of infection to surrounding tissues.

Further analysis showed that preventive measures played a crucial role in reducing complication rates. Pregnant women who received oral hygiene education, regular dental monitoring, and minimally invasive treatment exhibited milder clinical manifestations and faster resolution of inflammatory processes. The results emphasize that early diagnosis and preventive strategies significantly reduce the risk of adverse maternal outcomes associated with periapical inflammation.

Discussion. The results of this study confirm that periapical tissue inflammation in pregnant women represents a significant clinical problem with a high risk of local and systemic complications. Physiological changes during pregnancy, including hormonal fluctuations and altered immune response, contribute to the progression of inflammatory processes and increase susceptibility to odontogenic infections. The predominance of chronic periapical inflammation and its exacerbations observed in this study is consistent with findings reported in previous research.

Local complications, such as abscess formation and soft tissue edema, were the most frequently identified outcomes, emphasizing the importance of early diagnosis and timely intervention. Systemic inflammatory manifestations, although less common, represent a potential risk to both maternal and fetal health. These findings support the concept that untreated periapical lesions may act as chronic inflammatory foci, contributing to adverse pregnancy outcomes.

The results also highlight the critical role of preventive strategies in reducing complication rates. Patients who received early dental examinations, oral hygiene education, and minimally invasive treatment showed significantly fewer complications and milder clinical manifestations. This underscores the importance of integrating preventive dental care into routine prenatal healthcare services.

Interdisciplinary collaboration between dental professionals and obstetric healthcare providers is essential for safe and effective management of periapical inflammation during pregnancy. The findings suggest that appropriate risk assessment, patient education, and adherence to pregnancy-safe treatment protocols can substantially reduce the burden of odontogenic complications in pregnant women.

Conclusion. Periapical tissue inflammation in pregnant women is associated with a considerable risk of complications that may negatively affect maternal health and pregnancy outcomes. The findings of this study demonstrate that delayed diagnosis and inadequate dental care contribute to the progression of inflammatory processes and the development of local and systemic complications.

Early detection, preventive dental care, and timely minimally invasive treatment significantly reduce the risk of complications. Regular dental examinations, patient education on oral hygiene, and close cooperation between dentists and obstetricians should be considered essential components of comprehensive prenatal care. Strengthening preventive strategies and integrating dental services into maternal healthcare programs can improve oral health outcomes and contribute to overall maternal and fetal well-being.

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