A new test for gum disease

Ahmed Khocht, DDS, an associate professor of periodontology at Temple University’s Maurice H. Kornberg School of Dentistry, led a team that studied the efficacy of a colored strip to detect gum disease by changing color in response to the levels of microbial sulfur compounds found in saliva. The strip changes from white to yellow, and the darker the shade of yellow the more severe the gum disease.

Khocht and his team looked at 75 patients divided into three groups — those with gingivitis, those with periodontitis and those that were healthy. A color chart formed the basis of scoring for the changes in the color strip, and were compared to scores for traditional assessments such as attachment levels, bleeding on probing, gingival index and plaque index.

Using a color strip would be quicker, easier than using those traditional, gingivitis, periodontitis and those that were healthy. A growing evidence suggests that people with gum disease have a higher risk of heart disease, low birth-weight babies and obesity.

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