

From the Editor

The expanding scope of interests of oral myology

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Suggested Citation

Stanley, E. O. (1979). The expanding scope of interests of oral myology. *International Journal of Oral Myology*, 5(3), 6.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52010/ijom.1979.5.3.3>



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The Expanding Scope of Interests of Oral Myology

Oral myology is an area of overlapping interests among various health disciplines, primarily those of dentistry and speech pathology. The original concern that brought the various groups together was that of treating tongue thrust. The mutual concerns have now broadened in scope to include the study and treatment of many related disorders. The muscular imbalance which stems from noxious oral habits and other forms of stress results not only in distortion of the maxillary arch and in dental malocclusion, but also in periodontal disease, temporomandibular joint dysfunction, and other pathological conditions. Simultaneous with the muscular imbalance and structural anomalies, and frequently as sequelae of those conditions, are seen various kinds of voice and articulation disorders.

The oral myologist is usually a specially trained speech pathologist, or dental hygienist, who works conjointly with a dentist or orthodontist in relieving unusual stress in the facial area which may result in speech and/or dental abnormalities. Because of their work in retraining the orofacial muscles, particularly those used in the swallowing mechanism, there is a growing potential for the placement of oral myologists on cleft palate, laryngectomy, cerebral palsy, and other cranio-facial or throat-related teams.

The International Association of Oral Myology is concerned with

... professional and scientific issues of interest to oral myologists, speech pathologists, dentists, dental hygienists, pedodontists, and all individuals concerned professionally with the mouth and its physiology (*IJOM*, Vol. 1, No. 4, October 1975, p. 150).

The stated purposes of the Association are

... to foster scientific research at acceptable universities and research centers; to provide training in Oral Myology at the college/university level; to establish meaningful intercourse with related fields; and to continually upgrade the standards and qualifications of those engaged in remediation of Oral Myofunctional disorders (*IJOM*, Vol. 2, No. 1, January, 1976, p. 29).

The membership has recently begun to broaden its clinical and research interests to include

- a) the effect of airway interference on growth and development of the face, jaws, and dentition.

- b) treatment and relief of pain from temporomandibular joint dysfunction.
- c) Gnathology and ortho-gnathology.
- d) Bio-feedback.
- e) Neuro-muscular facilitation.
- f) Applied dental kinesiology.
- g) Reflexology.
- h) Acupressure.

According to Dr. Marvin Hanson, of the University of Utah and former president of I.A.O.M.,

In order for a clinician to competently treat oral myofunctional disorders, he needs a thorough knowledge of the anatomy and physiology involved in chewing, swallowing, and talking; he needs a broad understanding of normal and abnormal human behavior; he needs experience and expertise in motivating children and adults; and he needs to have received adequate supervised training in the field of oral myology (*IJOM*, Vol. 5, No. 2, April, 1979, p. 8).

Encouraging a wide variety of motivational techniques, Eileen C. Stewart-Seed suggested that the therapist should be well read on such subjects as "... positive mental attitude, psycho-cybernetics, and numerous psychological approaches designed to understand and/or modify human behavior" (*IJOM*, Vol. 5, No. 2, April, 1979, p. 10).

The International Journal of Oral Myology aims to

- a) Educate the public regarding the field of oral myology and related areas.
- b) Establish harmonious relationships with members in other professions.
- c) Encourage research.
- d) Publicize the importance of myofunctional therapy as an auxiliary to the dental professional and to speech pathologists.
- e) Explore our relationships with such other professionals as pediatricians, physical therapists, and ear, nose, and throat specialists.

Because of the broadening fields of interest, oral myology interacts with an increasing number of disciplines; yet, it is emerging as a well-defined discipline of its own. Rather than a sub-profession concerned only with the eradication of deviate swallow patterns, oral myology studies all aspects of orofacial muscle imbalance and discomfort and the resulting changes in structure and in speech. The oral myologist works closely with any professional who is dedicated to the understanding of, and

management of, gnathological problems.

The membership of the International Association of Oral Myology consists of dentists, dental hygienists, speech pathologists, and all others interested in the above-mentioned areas. There are five classifications of membership:

- 1) Active members are dentists.
- 2) Certified members are those who have completed an approved training course, passed a written examination, and had an on-site visit.
- 3) Provisional members are those who are working toward certification.
- 4) Life members are 65 years of age or older.
- 5) Associate members are non-voting members. This category includes students and all individuals interested in the work and purposes of the Association.

A sixth category of membership, to include certification of non-degreed individuals, is under consideration.

Dues for I.A.O.M. are \$30.00 per year, with a portion of the dues being set aside for *The International Journal of Oral Myology*. A convention is held annually. The Seventh Annual Convention was held June 22-25, 1979, at Holiday Inn, Chicago O'Hare/Kennedy, Chicago, Illinois. The next scheduled annual convention is to be held in Denver in June, 1980. For information regarding the Association or the convention, please inquire at the following address:

IAOM
P.O. Box 50185
Tucson, Arizona 85703

It is the sincere desire of all who work on *The International Journal of Oral Myology* to keep pace with the expanding scope of Oral Myology by giving the greatest possible expression to the concerns of the membership of IAOM and of all interested individuals. We welcome, and need, your contributions of research articles, case studies, therapy techniques, Letters to the Editor, and manuscripts on subjects of interest to the field. Send, also, your professional announcements and other news and comments. With your help, we shall strive to produce a journal which will be of service and value to the professionals who read it.

E.O.S.