Research Note

Determining research priorities for orofacial myology

Allen H. Nelson

Suggested Citation

Nelson, A. H. (1987). Determining research priorities for orofacial myology. *International Journal of Orofacial Myology*, 13(3), 14-15.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52010/ijom.1987.13.3.3>

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the International Association of Orofacial Myology (IAOM). Identification of specific products, programs, or equipment does not constitute or imply endorsement by the authors or the IAOM. The journal in which this article appears is hosted on [Digital Commons](#), an Elsevier platform.

DETERMINING RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR OROFACIAL MYOLOGY

Allen H. Nelson, Ph.D.

This article is a follow-up to related work published in the July 1987 issue of this journal (13[2], pp. 10-12). It also reports on research development activities which occurred during the 1987 International Association of Orofacial Myology Chicago conference. The earlier article discussed key issues and problems related to conducting research relevant to the orofacial myology profession. These issues formed the basis of the first part of a research seminar I presented at the 1987 conference. The second part of the presentation focused on identifying important research topics, through the direct involvement of conference participants. This article describes the results of that process.

The need for increased research within orofacial myology reflects a consensus of opinion by the 1987 I.A.O.M. conference attendees. A step towards identifying some research priorities was taken at the conference. Following a review of general research procedures and concepts, 22 attendees of a research seminar were surveyed to identify key areas for orofacial myology research. As a first step, each participant submitted one research question important to the profession. Research questions were then compiled and listed. During the compilation process, questions were grouped and this compilation resulted in 11 different questions.

These 11 questions were then directly entered into a microcomputer to produce a listing of items in a questionnaire format. The questionnaire was established with a five-point Likert rating scale with the value of 1 indicating little importance and the value of 5 indicating a high level of importance. The questionnaire was then printed, reproduced, and distributed to the sample of 22 participants.

Participants rated the relative significance of each of the 11 research questions. At this point, the question arose as to whether items which would be more feasible to research should have higher priority. It was decided that items should be rated on the basis of *importance to the profession regardless of the ease or difficulty of the associated research*. Mean scores for each of the research items were calculated and the items were ranked. The results are summarized in Table 1 (pg. 15).

Implications of the Findings

These research questions represent a variety of potential research studies. Some of the studies which could be designed to address specific questions would be largely descriptive, such as describing the proportion of orthodontic cases with digit-sucking history, or the in-

cidence of tongue thrust in persons with root resorption. The most highly rated research issues reflect areas that are, perhaps, more controversial and more difficult to research. These include issues such as the relationships between oral resting posture, tongue thrust, and occlusion. While these areas can be problematic in terms of measurement and variable control, they also represent the essence of myofunctional therapy, and are deserving of continued research efforts.

Towards the Future

In the limited time available at the seminar, general problems in initiating research studies were discussed. Of special concern was the need for standardization, careful variable definition, and measurement protocols which insure adequate reliability. Collaborative research -- both within and across professions -- was considered a viable means for combining resources in research. Such research activities were discussed in the context of the collaborative research development project conducted with nursing professionals, sponsored by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (Krueger, et al., 1978). Facilitators and inhibitors relative to collaborative research were outlined: Location, Experience, Personalities, Technical Support, Availability of Subjects, Library Resources, Time, Money, Computing Resources, and Motivation. The listing is not intended to be exclusive.

Summary

A survey utilizing one round of open-ended responses followed by a second round of priority ratings was conducted during a 1987 I.A.O.M. conference seminar with 22 participants. The results of the survey were used to rank order 11 identified priorities. Subsequent discussion focused on ways in which both individual and collaborative research could be undertaken in the near future.

TABLE 1
Mean Ratings for Research Priorities
Listed in Rank Order of Importance

Item	Mean*
The effect of orofacial myofunctional treatment on orthodontic stability	4.6
The effectiveness of orofacial resting posture in assisting the stability or orthodontic results	4.5
The influence of altering the orofacial resting posture on tongue-thrusting habits	4.4
The correlation of open lips rest posture and malocclusion	4.2
The relationship of occlusion to tongue-thrust swallowing	4.2
The proportion of orthodontic cases having a history of digit-sucking habits	3.3
Does tongue thrust create open bites or does open bite cause tongue thrust	3.2
The effect of sleeping posture on occlusion	2.8
The incidence of tongue thrust in persons with root resorption	2.6
The use of biofeedback techniques in myofunctional therapy	2.6
The effectiveness of self-recording charts in orofacial myofunctional treatment	2.4

*Where 1 = "little importance" and 5 = "high level of importance"

REFERENCES

- Krueger, J.C., Nelson, A.H., & Wolanin, M.O. (1978). *Nursing research: Development collaboration and utilization*. Germantown: Aspen Systems.
- Nelson, A.H. (1987). Research in orofacial myology. *International Journal of Orofacial Myology*, 13,[2] 10-12.