

Emerging challenges in aligners and cleft care in orthodontics

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In recent years, clear aligners have become increasingly becoming popular as an alternative to braces. Many patients particularly adults opt them for their cosmetic appearance, ease of placement and removal, better oral hygiene maintenance. Simple malocclusions can be effectively corrected with the aligners. But complex and mutilated malocclusions can be corrected only by fixed appliances. Treatment challenges with aligners include, cases needing extraction, growth modification, rotation of canines and premolars, extrusion, root torque, use of auxiliary anchorage devices, cleft lip and palate cases etc., Breakage, non-compliance, stain formation could delay the treatment. Inter-Proximal Reduction of teeth (IPR), elastics, bite rim, other attachments may be required for completion of the treatment. The IPR technique involves judicious grinding of the proximal enamel surface to create space for alignment of teeth. Overgrinding can lead to sensitivity, loss of vitality, and pain in the teeth.

Currently, there are many players in the market for Aligner production. Most do vigorous marketing and make tall claims about their success rates. Practitioners should be cautious while choosing the manufacturer. Treatment planning is more crucial to orthodontic success than aligners alone. An orthodontist's in-depth knowledge of facial growth and development enables him to predict the growth pattern of a patient, anticipate problems, and treat them accordingly. A visit to an orthodontist is the right step towards a brighter smile!