



NASOALVEOLAR MOULDING – AN EXEMPLARY APPROACH FOR REFORMATION OF CLEFT LIP

Cosmetology

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ABSTRACT

Cleft lip and palate (CLP) is the most common congenital defect of the oral cavity which possesses a serious socioeconomic trouble. A unilateral cleft lip and alveolar deformity is often associated with significant abnormality in nasal cartilage morphology and asymmetry of alar base and columella. The lower lateral alar cartilage is seen to be depressed and concave. There are two approaches to correct this deformity, one involving surgical repair alone and the other involving pre-surgical molding of the cleft segments followed by surgical repair. The present case discusses the non-surgical approach i.e. pre-surgical moulding of the cleft segments in a 4 month old patient to treat unilateral cleft lip through nasoalveolar moulding by modified fixed appliance which was considered to be better and preferable. The goal of pre-surgical nasoalveolar molding was to align and approximate the alveolar cleft segments while at the same time achieving correction of the nasal cartilage and soft tissue deformity. Nasal stent and the intra oral molding plate was adjusted weekly or biweekly to gradually correct the nasal and alveolar deformities.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION:

Cleft lip and palate (CLP) is the most common congenital defect of the oral cavity which possesses a serious socioeconomic trouble. India is the second most populated and developing country in the world with a population of 1.21 billion, it is estimated that out of 24.5 million births per year, the birth prevalence of clefts is between 27,000 and 33,000 clefts.¹The unilateral cleft lip and alveolar deformity is associated with significant abnormality in nasal cartilage morphology and asymmetry of alar base and columella. The lower lateral alar cartilage is often depressed and concave.² There are two approaches to correct this deformity, one involving surgical repair alone and the other involving presurgical molding of the cleft segments followed by surgical repair.³ Among these approaches, non-surgical approach i.e. presurgical molding was considered to be better and preferable. It was introduced and first described by Grayson in the early 1990s.

Presurgical nasoalveolar molding (PNAM) is a non-surgical method of reshaping the gums, lips and nostrils previous to CLP surgery, thus lessening the severity of the cleft.¹The goal of presurgical nasoalveolar molding is to align and approximate the alveolar cleft segments while at the same time achieving correction of the nasal cartilage and soft tissue deformity.²The principle of NAM is based on the breakdown of the intercellular matrix of nasal cartilage due to the abundance of hyaluronic acid during infant's first 6-8 weeks. During this period, there are high levels of maternal estrogen in fetal circulation, which triggers an increase in hyaluronic acid.⁴Grayson and Shetye developed the concept of NAM, which combined a nasal molding stent with a passive, presurgical molding appliance in treating CLP infants.²

Nasal stent and the intraoral smolding plate were adjusted weekly or biweekly to gradually correct the nasal and alveolar deformities. Benum RD and Figueroa AA used a different approach—adhesive paper tape and a nasal elevator to improve the morphology of the nose before the surgery.⁵

CASE REPORT:

A 4 month old female patient reported to the department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry, Seema Dental College and Hospital, Rishikesh with the complaint of clefting of lips on left side

since birth. Medical history was non-contributory (Fig 1).



FIG 1: LIP CLEFT

A modified appliance for NAM was then fabricated. (fig 2) which consisted of elastic attached to wire and surgical tape. The tape was replaced everyday by parents until the lip segments are in apposition to maintain the effect of a simulated nonsurgical lip adhesion before surgery.



FIG 2: IMMEDIATE INTRAORAL MOLDING WITH APPLIANCE



Patient was recalled for follow up after 1 month which showed closer approximation of the two sides of the cleft therefore nasal molding was continued for over 10 weeks. Lip repair was done at 8 months of age. The appliance was then discontinued after surgery.



FIG 4: AND NAM

DISCUSSION:

Various modifications of appliance for naso alveolar moulding have been introduced over time. There was modified muscle-activated maxillary orthopaedic appliance used by Suri and Tompson⁶ in NAM therapy; Retnakumari et al⁷ then described alveolar molding appliance with expansion screw; followed by an extra-oral nasal molding appliance and self-retentive appliance with orthodontic wire used by in the field of presurgical infant orthopedics. Though appliances are plenty their comfort is the deciding factor for the patient compliance. Also till the completion of the surgery the approximation of the two parts of the cleft is increased to make the cleft surgery a success.

CONCLUSION:

NAM technique has been significantly shown to improve the surgical outcome of CLP patients compared with other techniques of presurgical orthopedics. NAM has proved to be an effective adjunctive therapy for reducing hard and soft tissue cleft deformity before surgery. However, it is crucial that members of the cleft team provide the parents and caregivers adequate training, education, active support, and encouragement during NAM treatment.

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