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The Stress-Breathing Connection in Atypical Orofacial Pain

Refractory atypical orofacial pain syndromes that do not respond favorably to traditional treatments are often postulated as a manifestation of psychological distress. When all extensive dental and medical diagnostics have been ruled out, in the absence of organic pathology, physiologic stress is presented as a causative variable in the pathomechanism of persistent facial pain and parafunctional habits.

Recent studies have elucidated the relationship between facial pain and sympathetic tonus. Despite extensive research on facial pain development, little is known about the effect of disturbed breathing chemistry and its role as a pro-inflammatory and physiological stressor in the body. This lecture provides new insight into how atypical tooth pain development may result from physiological disturbances combined with maladaptive stress responses.