

Examiner Alignment and Assessment in Clinical Periodontal Research

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Abstract:

Objectives: To conduct a literature analysis on examiner alignment and assessment (EAA) information published in clinical periodontal studies, and how EAA has changed over time.

Methods: Clinical studies/trials that used indices of gingivitis as outcome measures were analyzed. Search engines included PubMed, Medline, Embase, and Cochrane Library. Search terms focused on gingival indices. Search constraints were set for time period (1996 to 2009), research type, study participants, and language. Ten journals were also hand searched.

Results: 1037 papers qualified. Of these, 288 (27.8%) included a statement on EAA, 434 (41.9%) offered no information, and 315 (30.4%) mentioned that one examiner executed all assessments, but no details were offered. Between 1996 and 2009, the percentage of publications that informed on EAA increased from 22.2% to 44.3%.

Conclusion: Over the past decade, reporting on EAA in published periodontal studies has improved, however there is still room for improvement.