

Dentofacial Orthopedics with Functional Appliances, 2e

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Systematic review

A comparison of the efficacy of fixed versus removable functional appliances in children with Class II malocclusion: A systematic review

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Summary

Objectives: To systematically compare the efficacy of fixed and removable functional appliances in Class II malocclusion in terms of morphological and patient-centred outcomes.

Search methods: A comprehensive search of electronic databases without language or time restrictions was undertaken, applying a pre-specified search strategy. Supplementary electronic searching of orthodontics journals and references list of included studies was performed.

Selection criteria: Randomized (RCTs) and controlled (CCTs) clinical trials involving children under 16 years with Class II malocclusion and overjet more than 5 mm were included.

Data collection and analysis: A range of clinician- and patient-centred outcomes were evaluated and compared. Risk of bias assessment was carried out using the Cochrane Collaboration tool.

Results: Only four clinical trials were found to meet our criteria, of which two were RCTs, comparing the Herbst and the Twin Block appliances. Two further CCTs, compared the Activator to the Forsus and the Twin Force Bite Corrector, respectively. One study was assessed to be at unclear and the remaining at high risk of bias, precluding meta-analysis. There was also significant clinical heterogeneity in terms of methodology, type of intervention and the measured outcomes. Both modalities were effective in correcting the overjet with little differences found in cephalometric changes and a shortage of data concerning patient-centred outcomes.

Conclusion: There is little evidence concerning the relative effectiveness of fixed and functional appliances or in relation to patient experiences and perceptions of these treatment modalities. Further well-designed clinical trials assessing the relative merits of both clinician- and patient-centred outcomes are needed.

Introduction

Functional appliances have been used for over a century in the management of Class II malocclusion being proven to produce a combination of dental and skeletal effects during the treatment phase to effectively reduce overjet in growing patients (1). There are marked differences in the specific choice of functional appliance type internationally with, for example, the Herbst most popular among USA and mainland European orthodontists (2) and the Twin Block (TB) most prevalent in the UK (3).

The primary difference between fixed, removable and hybrid functional appliances is the premium on compliance with removable and hybrid variants while full-time wear is guaranteed with the fixed type. Fixed functional appliances may be further sub-classified as fixed rigid, fixed flexible and fixed hybrid (4). The fixed rigid variants including the Herbst appliance have been shown to have both skeletal and dentoalveolar effects (5). Other appliances in this group include the fixed twin Block and mandibular anterior repositioning appliance (MAR). Among the fixed flexible group is the Jasper Jumper. Fixed hybrid functionals encompass features of rigid and flexible appliances with a spring.

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1

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