A Handbook for Physicians

Edward R. Bollard, MD, DDS, FACP
Consulting Editor

An area of medicine that is frequently overlooked, often misunderstood, and potentially goes undertreated or untreated when signs and symptoms arise is pathology of the oral cavity and associated structures. In both ambulatory and hospital settings, diseases, dysfunction, and trauma of the teeth; periodontal tissues; bony elements; soft tissue structures; and salivary glands provide diagnostic challenges to the treating physician when she or he does not possess a thorough understanding of oral anatomy as well as oral medicine.

In June 2008, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) in collaboration with the American Dental Education Association, understanding the deficiencies in oral medicine that traditional medical school curricula contain, published a report of an expert panel as part of the Medical School Objectives Project entitled, “Contemporary Issues in Medicine: Oral Health Education for Medical and Dental Students.”1 This was an attempt to highlight and close the gaps in knowledge that exist in those who will be called on to evaluate the diseases of and related to the oral cavity in the practice of medicine.

In this issue of the Medical Clinics of North America, Dr Stoopler, Dr Sollecito, and colleagues present nine articles that also attempt to reduce this knowledge gap by emphasizing the normal anatomy, common anatomic variations, as well as relevant orofacial pathology that can be applied to our comprehensive care of the medical patient.

Edward R. Bollard, MD, DDS, FACP
Department of Medicine
Penn State–Hershey Medical Center
Penn State University College of Medicine
Hershey, PA 17033, USA
E-mail address: ebollard@hmc.psu.edu
REFERENCE