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# CLINICAL APPLICATION OF PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY AS AN ADJUNCT TO THE NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT OF CHRONIC PERIODONTITIS: LITERATURE REVIEW

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The present study aims to evaluate and compare the effects and advantages of photodynamic therapy (PDT) as an adjunct in the treatment of scaling and root planing (RPR), on the reduction of the clinical effects of chronic periodontitis, in relation to RPR alone. Method: Pappers were collected in the PubMed, LILACS and SciElo databases and descriptors were used in English and Portuguese, searched in DeCS: Photodynamic therapy (photodynamic therapy); Lasers (Lasers); Periodontal Medicine; Chronic Periodontitis (Chronic Periodontitis). A total of 35 studies were excluded and 19 were elected. Results: The analyzed studies showed differences in relation to the therapy used in terms of photoinitiators, treatment time and wave spectrum used. However, as a whole, they presented advantages regarding the use of PDT as an adjunct in the treatment of chronic periodontitis. Conclusion: PDT as an adjunct to non-surgical periodontal treatment of chronic periodontitis showed benefits in reducing the clinical aspects of the disease such as plaque index, gingival bleeding and gum inflammation. However, further studies are needed to develop application protocols and guidelines for dentists, and thus ensure the effectiveness and safety of photodynamic therapy in chronic periodontal treatment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Chronic periodontitis is a disease characterized by local inflammation that affects the oral tissues responsible for supporting the teeth, causing a progressive loss of alveolar bone (da Silva ICS et al., 2017; Berhard J et al., 2015). Its cause is due to pathogenic bacteria already existing in the dental biofilm, which, when migrating to the gingival sulcus, lead to a complex host response to bacterial infection, which can be modified by systemic and behavioral factors (da Silva ICS et al., 2017; Berhard J et al., 2015; Bundidpun P, Srisuwantha R, Laosrisin N, 2017). One of its clinical signs are gingival bleeding, migration of pathogenic bacteria, bone loss and the presence of periodontal pockets, and this pathology is classified according to its severity and extension (da Silva ICS et al., 2017). Mechanical treatment of chronic periodontitis consists of removing supragingival and subgingival bacterial plaque, and microbial control through nonsurgical periodontal therapy, using manual and ultrasonic equipment, where scaling and root planing (RPR) is performed, which is considered gold standard for its treatment, (Joseph B et al., 2017; Sculean A et al., 2015).

Thus, halting the progression of periodontal disease. However, some affected areas may not respond well to RPR treatment, requiring other complementary therapies for better efficacy (Ferreira A V, 2017). The use of topical or systemic antibiotics, in addition to mechanical treatment, are considered the main means of reducing microbial agents. Although the drug can help to reduce these pathogens, the frequent use of this type of drug can cause bacterial resistance, in addition to the difficulty of reaching considerable levels in the gingival fluid of periodontal pockets, to extinction of these bacteria (Meimandi M et al., 2017; Nguyen, S; Hiorth, M, 2017). Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a technique in increasing use in dental practice, being applied to treatments of various pathologies of the stomatognathic system, such as soft tissue injuries (Abduljabbar, T, et al., 2017). Viruses, fungi and bacteria are sensitive to PDT when exposed to the photosensitizer, with a reduction in bacterial load, suggesting its applicability in chronic periodontitis, eradicating periodontopathic pathogens (Bundidpun, P; Srisuwantha R, Laosrisin N, 2017). PDT is not intended to replace the antimicrobial treatment of drugs used as adjuvants in the treatment of chronic periodontitis or any other conventional treatment, such as RPR. This new modality comes to offer a complement in the treatment of localized oral

infections, as is the case with the topic discussed here (Eduardo, CDP, et al., 2015). The advantages that PDT offers compared to antibiotic therapy include the immediate elimination of microorganisms, as well as virulence factors and local deleterious effect only where the photosensitizer and light are irradiated concurrently (de Freitas, LM, et al., 2016). Therefore, studies to update the dental clinical practice on methods complementary to conventional treatments such as RPR for the control of chronic periodontitis are essential. The aim of this papper is to present, through a literature review, the clinical applications and advantages of using PDT as an adjunct to the nonsurgical periodontal treatment of chronic periodontitis compared to the treatment of isolated RPR.

# RESULTS

Table I refers to the authors, the subject of the articles, year of publication, sample number and results of clinical cases and randomized studies. A critical synthesis of the main results was carried out, taking as a time interval the years 2016 to 2019 with regard to conventional periodontal treatment associated with the use of PDT in the following aspects: evaluation of oral hygiene conditions, Visible Plaque Index (VPI); Gingival Bleeding Index (GBI), Probing Bleeding (PB), Probing Depth (PD) and Clinical Insertion Level (CIL) at the beginning and end of each treatment, and the light spectrum used in the treatment.

articles were found in the databases. As inclusion criteria, original articles published in English and/or Portuguese were considered, indexed in a period of 6 years, between 2015 and 2020; observational studies, randomized clinical trials, case-control studies, case reports and systematic reviews were chosen. Exclusion criteria were: not presenting the article in its entirety, not meeting the type of study required, or approaching an in vitro sample or animal studies. After applying the filter of year of publication and languages, the number was reduced to 23, and of these only 19 met the pre-established study type criteria.

# DISCUSSION

The mechanism of action of PDT is through the activation of a photosensitive chemical substance that is not toxic to oral tissues, at a specific wavelength that damages cell membranes and DNA of pathogenic bacteria, causing cell lysis (Fonseca, RR, et al. 2017) The advantages that PDT offers compared to antibiotic therapy include immediate elimination of microorganisms, as well as virulence factors and local deleterious effect only where the photosensitizer and light are irradiated concurrently (de Freitas, LM, et al., 2016). The most used photosensitizers in oral medicine treatment are phenothiazine dyes, especially Methylene Blue (Eduardo, CDP, et al., 2015). The use of PDT in the treatment of chronic periodontitis aims to reduce or

Table 1. Description of articles included in the review

| Nº | Authors                                                                                                             | Theme                                                                                                                                                                              | Sample                                                                                                       | Intervention                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Biasi PR, Santos<br>BM, Guerra LF,<br>Campos LA. 2019                                                               | Low-intensity laser<br>as auxiliary therapy<br>in periodontal<br>treatment- Case<br>reports                                                                                        | Two patients, male,<br>with generalized<br>chronic periodontitis                                             | After dividing the 4 quadrants of<br>the dental arch, the therapies in<br>each quadrant were randomly<br>selected: RPR + LASER; PDT+<br>LASER+ photoinitiator; RPR+<br>chlorhexidine 2% or PDT<br>isolated                                                                  | It was concluded that the treatment<br>made with the use of LASER and PDT<br>helps to reduce bleeding and has an<br>anti-inflammatory effect, associated with<br>a photoinitiator such as methylene blue<br>has bactericidal effects                                                                                            |
| 2  | Silva NTD, Silva<br>DNA, Azevedo<br>MLDS, Silva Júnior<br>FLD, Almeida ML,<br>Longo JPF,<br>Moraes M, et<br>al.2016 | The Effectiveness of photodynamic therapy as a complementary therapy to mechanical instrumentation on residual periodontal pocket clinical parameters: a clinical split-mouth test | 114 sites, with 57 sites<br>in the test group and 57<br>in the control group,<br>with periodontal<br>pockets | Four quadrants were randomly treated by scraping and root smoothing (SRP), diode laser (810nm wavelength, 1.5W and 320 µm fiber, contact and scanning technique), SRP + PDT (with 808 diode laser nm, 0.5 W) and laser + SRP (with 808 nm diode laser, 1 W) in each patient | It was concluded that PDT was more<br>effective as an adjunct treatment to SRP<br>than SRP alone; however, no distinct<br>differences were found between the two<br>treatment modalities regarding the<br>reduction of certain pathogenic bacteria                                                                              |
| 3  | Bundidpun P,<br>Srisuwantha R,<br>Laosrisin N.<br>2018                                                              | Clinical effects of<br>photodynamic therapy<br>as an adjunct to full-<br>mouth ultrasonic scaling<br>and root planing in<br>treatment of chronic<br>periodontitis                  | Twenty patients with moderate to severe chronic periodontitis.                                               | They were treated with a subgingival piezoelectric ultrasonic device alone in the control group and auxiliary treatment with PDT in the test group                                                                                                                          | The study showed that the addition of a single application of PDT as an adjunctive therapy to SRP did not result in an improvement in terms of reduced probing pocket depth, reduced plaque index and clinical attachment gain, but did result in a reduction significantly greater gingival bleeding and gingival inflammation |
| 4  | Fonseca RR, Ramos<br>UD, Menezes SA,<br>Neto AR, Oliveira<br>PG. 2018                                               | Use of antimicrobial photodynamic therapy in type 2 diabetic patients with chronic periodontitis: case report                                                                      | 1 Male, 56-year-old<br>patient, black, type II<br>diabetes. was<br>diagnosed with<br>chronic periodontitis.  | The whole mouth RPR was performed using manual and ultrasonic instruments together with several applications of PDT with phenothiazine hydrochloride at 10 mg/ml, each dental element being irradiated for 1 minute, in 4 consultations carried out within 14 days          | In this case, PDT proved to be an exceller<br>adjuvant therapy in the treatment of<br>periodontal disease, as clinical signs suci<br>as gingival bleeding, bacterial plaque,<br>dental mobility and PD had a significant<br>decrease with PD of an average of 3 mm<br>were observed                                             |

## **METHODS**

This is a narrative review of the literature, which addresses works related to PDT as an adjunct in the treatment of chronic periodontitis in RPR. Pappers were collected from PubMed, LILACS and SciElo databases. For research using descriptors in English and Portuguese, searched in DeCS: Photodynamic therapy (Photodynamic therapy); Laser (Laser); Periodontal Medicine (periodontal medicine); Chronic Periodontitis (Chronic Periodontitis), using different search strategies according to the specificity of each base. Through an advanced search carried out between the periods of August and September 2020, 35

remedy the clinical signs of the disease such as bleeding, tooth mobility, probing depth (PS), bacterial plaque and gingival recession (Fonseca, RR, et al., 2017). Analyzing the decrease in PD in patients with chronic periodontitis from the conjugated therapy treated here, reported by Fonseca (2018), he presented the treatment of the pathology in four sessions of PDT with phenothiazine hydrochloride at 10mg/ml, together with RPR, in a diabetic patient, in a period of 14 days, resulting in a decrease in PD from >5mm to 3mm (Fonseca RR, et al., 2018) This result is similar to the study by Biasi (2019), in which the use of RPR + PDT+ methylene blue photoinitiator, brought a reduction in PD in quadrant 3, ranging over a 45-day period from 133mm before treatment to 78mm after, according to the sum of PD

at each site in the quadrant ( Park, D, et al., 2019). Taking into account the difference in systemic issues, type of photoinitiator and period of treatment, the common term PDT used in both cases proved to be efficient in terms of reducing PD for both patients. According to Bundidpun et al, the randomized clinical trial with a sample group of twenty patients with moderate to severe chronic periodontitis treated with a subgingival piezoelectric ultrasonic device alone in the control group and auxiliary treatment with PDT in the test group showed that the addition of a single application of PDT as an adjunct therapy to RPR did not result in an improvement in terms of reduced probing pocket depth, reduced plaque index and clinical attachment gain, but resulted in a significantly greater reduction in gingival bleeding and gingival inflammation (Park, D, et al., 2019).

In the clinical study by Silva et al. (2016), 114 sites were analyzed, with 57 sites in the test group and 57 in the control group, with residual periodontal pockets from each hemiarch divided into two treatment groups: RPR, right side; RPR + to PDT, left side or RPR, left side; RPR + to PDT, right side. The results of the study suggest a better response of single-rooted teeth in relation to periodontal disease and level of clinical attachment, even in the test group, leading to the conclusion that PDT was effective for single-rooted teeth, and, for multirooted teeth, higher application frequencies would be necessary to obtain similar results in both types of teeth (Biasi, PR. 2019). Malgikar et al. (2016) mentioned that the use of low-level laser in photodynamic therapy involves the proper wavelength to eliminate microorganisms treated with photosensitizing drugs, based on an artifice that is based on a set of photo-oxidative reactions, which when triggering morphobiological changes, promote cell necrosis. The photosensitizing agent in periodontics is impregnated into the subgingival biofilm, penetrating bacterial cells. The oxygen from bacterial cells, upon absorbing the released energy, transforms into singlet oxygen, which, together with highly reactive free radicals, degrade polysaccharides and destroy bacterial biological systems (Silva, NTD, 2020). One of the calculations to define the energy dose explained by Luke (2019), is the mW/second, which corresponds, for example, to 100 mW/10 seconds = 1000 J = 1J (Malgikar, S, et al., 2020).

Just like this calculation, in the study by Bundidpun (2018) a laser diode dose was used, which is equivalent to a wavelength of 660nm, output power of 100mW. Application was performed at six sites per tooth and 10 seconds per site resulting in a significantly large reduction in gingival bleeding and inflammation (Park, D, et al., 2019). A study by Lulic M (2019) demonstrated that repeated applications of PDT (5 times in 2 weeks) adjunct to root planing and scaling (RAR) significantly improved probing cavity depth, fixation, clinical level, and probing bleeding. After 6 months compared to the group treated with RAR alone. Another study by Bundidpun P. (2018) showed that addition of a single application of PDT as adjunctive therapy did not result in an improvement in terms of reduced pocket depth and reduction in plaque index, but did result in a significant reduction in bleeding and gingival inflammation. With this we can see that there are still some controversies (Bundidpun P, et al., 2018). PDT as an adjunct to the non-surgical periodontal treatment of chronic periodontitis compared to the treatment of isolated RPR has beneficial effects, such as reducing the depth of the periodontal pocket, reducing the plaque index, gingival bleeding and gingival inflammation. However, new clinical studies, randomized with a larger number of samples, are needed, with the development of application protocols and guidelines for dentists, in order to guarantee the effectiveness and safety of photodynamic therapy in chronic periodontal treatment.

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