

Root of the Matter: NEW 2017 Classification Scheme for Periodontal Diseases and Conditions from the American Academy of Periodontology

In November 2017, the World Workshop on the Classification of Periodontal and Peri-implant Diseases and Conditions was conducted jointly by the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) and the European Federation of Periodontology. The focus of this workshop was to develop a new classification scheme for periodontal diseases and conditions, in order to reflect information from current scientific research and international expertise in the field of periodontics. The new classification scheme replaces the classification system that was previously developed by the AAP¹ and used since 1999.

An overview of the new classification scheme has been published by Caton et al. in an article titled “A New Classification Scheme for Periodontal and Peri-implant Diseases and Conditions – Introduction and Key Changes from the 1999 Classification”.² This overview article is publicly available in a supplemental issue of the AAP’s [Journal of Periodontology \(June 2018\)](#), which readers can access online free of charge. The new classification scheme is supported by a number of consensus reports and case definition papers which have also been published in the *Journal of Periodontology* and made publicly available. Direct links to these have been embedded in the overview article by Caton et al. in order to facilitate access online.

The new 2017 classification scheme is organized with four broad categories of diseases or conditions which include²:

- 1) Periodontal health and gingival diseases/conditions
- 2) Periodontitis
- 3) Other conditions affecting the periodontium
- 4) Peri-implant diseases and conditions.

Each broad category is then further broken down into layers of subcategorization. For example, dental biofilm-induced gingivitis falls under the broad category of periodontal health and gingival diseases/conditions; however, three sub-categories related to biofilm-induced gingivitis are then further delineated.

Of particular interest, the new 2017 scheme has incorporated staging and grading components to assist with care planning specifically for individuals with periodontitis. The new staging component is based on disease severity and the complexity of management, and ranges from Stage I (initial periodontitis) to Stage IV (severe periodontitis with potential for loss of the dentition).² The grading component depicts the evidence of or risk of rapid disease progression and the anticipated response to treatment.² It ranges from Grade A (slow rate of progression) to Grade C (rapid rate of progression).²

There are a number of reasons to learn about the new 2017 classification scheme, including the professional responsibility to remain current in knowledge of dental hygiene practice and information related to foundational periodontology. Statement #9 of the CDHBC [Code of Ethics](#)³ addresses the responsibility for lifelong professional learning, as follows:

“The dental hygienist is conscious of the changes in research, technology and clinical practice. The dental hygienist is committed to meeting the diverse needs of the client and is

responsible for maintaining currency and competency. Self-evaluation and continuing study is the obligation of the individual dental hygienist.”

Additionally, the use of disease classification systems helps to facilitate communication between health professionals, clients and others, such as insurance providers. Lastly, as new research is undertaken in the field of periodontology, it can be expected that investigators will utilize the new classification scheme when reporting studies in scientific literature. At the same time, it is important to recognize that new research builds upon that of older studies; therefore, it will be important to remain familiar with the 1999 classification system as well.

For all of these reasons dental hygienists are encouraged to learn about the new AAP classification scheme now that it has been published. As a friendly reminder, QAP continuing competence credits can be claimed for reading credible journal articles related to dental hygiene (to a maximum of 25 credits per cycle). In order to claim credit for this type of learning activity, a reflection on the learning needs to be documented in [a QAP Reflection Template Form](#), and a copy of the completed reflection form should be retained in case the College requests to review it.

References:

1. Armitage, G. Development of a classification system for periodontal diseases and conditions. *Ann Periodontol.* 1999;4(1):1-6.
2. Caton J, Armitage G, Berglundh T, et al. A new classification scheme for periodontal and peri-implant diseases and conditions – Introduction and key changes from the 1999 classification. *J Periodontol.* 2018;89(Suppl 1):S1-8.
3. College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia. Code of ethics. Victoria, BC.