

It was heartening to read the review of Temporomandibular Disorders in the December 18th NEJM with its cautionary words on treatment and the need for more research. Equally compelling is the need to upgrade medical and dental school curricula, both sorely lacking in up-to-date teaching about these disorders. Experts agree that TMJDs are complex conditions influenced by genes, gender, behavioral and environmental triggers. Moreover, chronic TMJD patients often experience comorbidities, such as; chronic headaches, allergies, dysautonomia, fibromyalgia, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, and sleep disorders. The TMJ Association ([www.TMJ.org](http://www.TMJ.org)) with co-sponsorship by eight NIH components, addressed this issue in a 2008 meeting exploring possible common genetic factors and mechanistic pathways to account for the multi-systems illnesses. The consensus today, prompted as well by the lack of scientific evidence on the safety and efficacy of the multitude of treatments available, is the need for a paradigm shift in research and clinical care. Research must be multidisciplinary and employ a systems approach if we are to resolve the pain and suffering of millions of TMJD patients.