

February 4, 2009

As the Co-Founder and President of The TMJ Association (TMJA), I was heartened to read your February 3rd article, "Best Treatment for TMJ May Be Nothing". The TMJ Association, www.tmj.org, is a national non-profit advocacy organization whose mission is to improve the quality of health care and lives of the over 30 million people affected by temporomandibular joint and muscle disorders (TMJDs), the majority of whom are women in their childbearing years.

We are in agreement with your article's cautionary words on treatment, words which echo the message of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), "Less is Often Best" when it comes to TMJ treatments.

Recent research also indicates that chronic TMJD patients often experience other medical pain conditions which primarily affect women. The TMJ Association in co-sponsorship with eight NIH agencies addressed this issue in a 2008 meeting which explored possible common genetic factors and mechanistic pathways to account for the multi-symptom illnesses.

Clearly, medical and dental health care providers need to be aware of the state of reliable information underlying the multitude of treatments currently being recommended to TMJ patients. Because of the lack of scientifically based treatments the best advice is, as you stated, may be doing nothing.

Sincerely,

Terrie Cowley
President
The TMJ Association