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Oil Pulling: Fact or Fad?

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## Introduction

There is a greater need in today’s world for better oral care across all populations. In developing countries, the tradition of oil pulling has provided an affordable and accessible alternative to antimicrobial rinse agents. Western society has taken note of this and oil pulling has emerged as the latest oral hygiene fad.

### Methods

This review of literature used the following databases: PubMed, CINAHL and Google Scholar to identify relevant research articles. Search terms included oil pulling, coconut oil, sesame seed oil, oil swishing, oral health, periodontitis, gingivitis, and bacterial adherence. The studies reviewed used previously validated data collection methods to report their results. Articles included in this review had to be published after 2015.

**Major findings:** Many studies have shown oil pulling to be comparable to chlorhexidine in antimicrobial properties and even reduce plaque adherence.

**Conclusions:** Oil pulling shows to be an additional method for improving oral hygiene by reducing bacterial counts, plaque adherence, malodor and aid in enhancing overall gingival health. Although there have been promising outcomes there needs to be larger scale, long term studies to definitively prove the benefits of oil pulling in the oral cavity. Additionally, these studies need to include subjects from varied geographic locations and cultures worldwide.

## Studies in favor of oil pulling

**Rayner et al.**

- **Purpose:** In 2016, a pilot study was completed by Rayner et al in order to assess changes in gingival bleeding and biofilm accumulation in young adults.
- **Results:** There was no statistically significant evidence that oil pulling for 10 minutes for a period of 10 days has any significant benefit over brushing and flossing alone. However, this study did acknowledge limitations due to time period, population and instruction compliance.

**Jaehri et al.**

- **Purpose:** A study to compare the antimicrobial effectiveness of oil pulling, herbal mouth rinses and fluoride mouthwash on S. mutans counts in saliva.
- **Results:** After treatments, maximum reduction in S. mutans was seen in the fluoride and herbal mouth rinse groups while there was no statistically significant difference in the oil pulling group.

## Results

### Property Found

- **High lauric acid content**
- **Lauric acid + sodium in saliva + sodium laureate**
- **Mechanical force**
- **Alkalihydrolysis of fat**

### Effect

- Inhibits growth of S. aureus, B. cereus, typhimurium, and E. coli
- Base for many soaps, reduces microbes
- Emulsifies oils, forms oil layer over tooth surface and prevents bacterial adhesion
- High saponification value aids in removing microbes

## Conclusion

Studies show the integration of oil pulling into daily oral hygiene can have the potential to be effective in preventing plaque accumulation, plaque-induced gingivitis and improvement of gingival health. There remains a need for further studies to definitively prove if this fad is indeed fact.

## Acknowledgements


## References

[Full list of references provided in the original document.]