

**Critical Review:  
What are the Psychosocial Effects of Cleft Lip and Palate?**

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This critical review examines the specific psychosocial effects that the diagnosis and treatment of cleft lip and palate has on individuals of all ages. Study designs include a systematic review, a case-control study and a retrospective chart review. Overall, the literature reviewed provides variable evidence regarding the topic of interest. It is thought that the diagnosis and treatment may have a negative impact on some individuals, although the extent and severity remain unknown. Recommendations for future research and clinical practice are provided.

***Introduction***

Cleft lip and palate (CLP) is a congenital malformation of the face and oral cavity that occurs during pregnancy (Kummer, 2008). Management of CLP is a lifelong process and requires multiple surgical and other intervention procedures to deal with issues such as facial abnormalities, difficulty feeding, speech impairments, abnormal resonance and hearing difficulties (Baker, Owens, Stern, & Willmot, 2008; Kapp-Simon, 2004; Kummer, 2008). In light of the complex nature of CLP, it is important to understand not only the medical implications of the disease and treatment, but the psychosocial implications as well (Cheung, Pheng, & Ho, 2006).

In recent decades, advances in the surgical technique and sequencing of procedures has allowed for improved repair of CLP. Similar advances have been made in the awareness, and attention to the psychosocial effects that CLP may have on individuals. With this has been a shift from focusing purely on the surgical treatment of CLP to a more holistic approach including geneticists, pediatricians, psychologists and social workers (Gussy & Kilpatrick, 2006; Kummer, 2008).

Research in the area

***Methods***

Search Strategy

with CLP were six times mor

critique, researchers did not define the descriptors „adequate and „excellent thus leaving readers with a vague understanding of these terms. It was acknowledged by researchers that while the use of

- Cheung, L.K., Pheng Loh, J.S., & Ho, S.M.Y. (2006). Psychosocial profile of Chinese with cleft lip and palate deformities. *Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal*, 44(1), 79-86.
- Gussy, M., & Kilpatrick, N. (2006). The self-concept of adolescents with cleft lip and palate: A pilot study using a multidimensional/hierarchical measurement instrument. *International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry*, 16, 335-341.
- Hunt, O., Burden, D., Hepper, P., & Johnston, C. (2005a). The psychosocial effects of cleft lip and palate: A systematic review. *European Journal of Orthodontics*, 27, 274-285.