Editorial

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THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF ENAMEL MATRIX PROTEINS IN REGENERATIVE DENTISTRY

Enamel matrix proteins (EMP) are pivotal in the development and mineralization of tooth enamel, representing a significant focus in regenerative dental treatments. EMP's ability to regenerate dental tissues—including enamel, dentin, and periodontal tissues—has shown promise in repairing damaged areas and treating periodontal diseases. Moreover, research has explored its potential in creating biomaterials for dental implants and fillings, further underlining its importance in modern dentistry.

EMP comprises several proteins and enzymes that form the organic matrix of enamel, with amelogenins constituting about 90% of these proteins. These amelogenins, characterized by their low molecular weight and hydrophobic nature, play a crucial role in enamel formation. The remaining 10% consists of non-amelogenins like enamelin and ameloblastin. The AMELX gene on the X chromosome primarily encodes these amelogenins, and although the Y chromosome also has a corresponding gene (AMELY), it is significantly less active. Research has shown that amelogenins are essential not just for the structural integrity of enamel but also for promoting tissue regeneration and bone tissue engineering.

The application of enamel matrix derivatives (EMD), which are rich in amelogenins, is crucial for periodontal wound healing. EMD stimulates the proliferation of various mesenchymal cells, such as fibroblasts, cementoblasts, osteoblasts, and stem cells, facilitating periodontal regeneration. Studies have indicated that EMD enhances the autocrine production of growth factors like TGF-β, which in turn stimulates other factors such as VEGF and PDGF, promoting a regenerative process reminiscent of odontogenesis. Clinical trials and histological findings in both animal models and human case reports have demonstrated that EMD can significantly improve outcomes in periodontal treatments, especially in the regeneration of root cementum, periodontal ligament, and bone. The potential of minimally invasive surgical techniques combined with EMD application further underscores its clinical relevance in enhancing periodontal healing and regeneration.

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