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### Oral Health Study

Dr. Gornitsky, from McGill University and the Jewish General Hospital, Montreal, Quebec, is the Primary Investigator on a two-year grant (2008-2010) from the CIHR to look at Oral Health in Scleroderma patients. To date few studies have adequately assessed the orofacial manifestations of SSc, which include diminished maximal oral aperture, atrophy of the oral mucosa, fibrotic changes, salivary hypofunction, periodontal ligament changes, enlarged parotid glands, and osteal resorption of the mandible among others. This study aims to determine the prevalence of the orofacial manifestations of SSc in Canada and to evaluate the impact that they may have on oral and general HRQoL. Addressing these issues will raise awareness about the oral health problems experienced by SSc patients and allow the Canadian Scleroderma Research Group (CSRG) to develop future projects, related to the orofacial manifestations associated with this disease, so that appropriate attention may be directed towards the prevention and treatment of these problems.

Dr. Gornitsky is also working on a study which will test the oxidative molecular modifications in the saliva of Scleroderma patients. Primary results indicate that the level of oxidation differs between scleroderma patients and controls, thus Dr. Gornitsky will look further into the proteins, lipids and DNA found in the patient's saliva to determine whether these elements have been damaged by oxidative stress associated with SSc. Furthermore, saliva contains many elements found in whole blood and could contain characteristic markers of SSc, so this study will determine whether information can be obtained from the saliva that may assist in the diagnosis and treatment of medical diseases, such as SSc.