Men with erection problems three times more likely to have inflamed gums

MALATYA, Turkey: Men in their thirties with inflamed gums caused by severe periodontal disease are three times more likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction, Turkish researchers have found. The study results confirm previous research from India from 2011 that linked both conditions.

In their study, Turkish researchers compared 80 men with erectile dysfunction with a control group of 82 men without erection problems. They found that 55 per cent of the men with erectile dysfunction had inflamed gums compared with 23 per cent in the control group.

When the results were adjusted for other factors, such as age, body mass index, household income and education level, the men with severe periodontal disease were 3.29 times more likely to suffer from erection problems than the men with healthy gums were.

The men in both groups were aged 50 to 40, with an average age of just under 36, and there were no significant differences when it came to body mass index, household income or education.

Their sexual function was assessed according to the International Index of Erectile Function and their gum health using the plaque index, bleeding on probing, probing depth and clinical attachment level.

"Erectile dysfunction is a major public health problem that affects the quality of life of some 150 million men, and their partners, worldwide," said lead author Dr Faith Oguz from İnönü University in Malatya, Turkey.

"Physical factors cause nearly two-thirds of cases, mainly because of problems with the blood vessels, with psychological issues like emotional stress and depression accounting for the remainder."

According to Oguz, many studies have reported that chronic periodontitis (CP) may induce systemic vascular diseases, such as coronary heart disease, which has been linked with erection problems.

"To our knowledge, erectile dysfunction and CP in humans are caused by similar risk factors, such as ageing, smoking, diabetes mellitus and coronary artery disease," said Oguz.

"We therefore excluded men who had systemic disease and who were smokers from this study."

"We particularly selected men aged between 50 and 40 to assess the impact of CP on erectile dysfunction without the results being influenced by the effects of ageing. The results of our study support the theory that CP is present more often in patients with erectile dysfunction than those without and should be considered a factor by clinicians treating men with erection problems."