“Cerezen has impacted everyone I have treated with it”

An interview with Dr Lance Knight, BUPA dental centre Manchester

The most widely prescribed treatment for temporomandibular disorder (TMD) has been an intra-oral stabilisation splint. With Cerezen, however, a new and more palatable alternative has recently found its way into the UK market from the US. Dr Lance Knight from the BUPA dental centre in Manchester has been one of the first prescribers in Britain. In this interview, he talks about the device and why he has been an enthusiastic early adopter.

Dental Tribune: Dr Knight, do you find a significant number of your patients present with TMD?

Dr Lance Knight: TMD as a condition is under-recognised. As professionals, we are aware that many patients who suffer with TMD do not always present in a way that allows the condition to be easily diagnosed. However, I would say I see patients with obvious signs of bruxism about once or twice every day.

What are the most common TMD symptoms you encounter in your practice?

Tooth grinding and clenching are something that we see a great deal of in the practice, but patients may also complain of jaw and/or neck pain, as well as unexplained headaches occasionally.

What has your typical solution for TMD sufferers been?

Historically, I have turned to intra-oral stabilisation splints to treat TMD sufferers. With them, I have had mixed success. For some patients, bite guards have been fantastic, and all that is needed to relieve the pain of TMD. Unfortunately, not all patients get on well with them, and for some who have strong gag reflexes they are just impossible to wear. Some patients may benefit from splints during the day; however, this is not always a practical option for them, as splints can affect speech, and of course one cannot eat with them in.

I have found splints to be reasonable in some cases, but they have not provided certain prospective success, meaning I have not been confident of the outcome patients will have.

How did you hear about Cerezen?

My Renew Health representative was the first person to make me aware of Cerezen. She came into the practice and explained about how Cerezen was a device that is inserted into the patient’s ear canal, close to the temporomandibular joint (TMJ). The ear canals change shape when the jaw is opened or closed, and Cerezen uses this anatomical change to provide a unique near-field treatment for TMD. Cerezen encourages the patient to return to the open-bite position, by applying subtle pressure to the walls of the ear canal, and thus minimises the tendency to clench the jaw and tense the surrounding muscles.

At first, I was sceptical — it sounds strange when one first hears that one is able to offer a patient a jaw treatment through the ear—but when she explained the science and provided a demonstration it made sense. I was particularly interested in the fact that the treatment is, like a splint, totally reversible. If it does not work, patients can simply remove it. With occlusal equilibration, which had always been another option for seeking to treat TMD, there is no going back, and here I was being presented with a second reversible option. I was keen to make my own evaluation of the product and was invited to test it on one of my patients, with which I had great success.

Cerezen has impacted everyone I have treated with it. For some, it has been subtle—the treatment is not an overnight wonder cure, it takes time for patients’ jaws to relearn the position they should be in during the day. Several months after treatment, patients predominantly report that they have had a reduction in pain—some have even reported an improvement in sleep!

What are the greatest benefits of Cerezen for both the patient and the prescriber?

For the patient, it is clear that Cerezen offers a significant improvement in comfort compared with traditional splints. It is provided at a good price point and is cost-effective, and can offer a change to the patient’s quality of life.

For the practitioner, the support from the company—the knowledge of the representatives and the support and training—is second to none. The product is quick and easy to prescribe, and I firmly believe that one achieves more successful outcomes for patients with TMD, and this increases one’s confidence in treating patients.

What is your overall assessment of the Cerezen device?

Cerezen has been a game changer for me in the way I look to treat TMD. My experience with the device has been remarkable. It is a fantastic tool to have to offer to TMD sufferers and is definitely my first option as a treatment for their condition. I am confident of prescribing it as the outcome it will have for patients. It is such a good feeling to be able to offer patients a potential solution to their problem that does not pose an oral health risk (no more occlusal equilibration) or burden their pocket (the manufacturers of Cerezen offer a money-back guarantee).

The support from Cerezen for the practice has been amazing. Implementing a new treatment can often be complex and expensive, as well as a massive change to the practice. With Cerezen, it is seamless.

The only real cost to practitioners is the time to learn about the device. Cerezen has the potential to be highly profitable for practices, maximising the treatments that can be offered in-house and reducing the number of patients who have to be referred out. The even greater reward has been the difference I am now able to offer my patients whom I struggled to help before.

Thank you very much for the interview.