

MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain a cohesive organization that serves its membership by promoting the art, science and professionalism of dentistry, and by communicating the value of optimal oral health to the community.

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NODA News

President's Message . . . *by Gregory P. Guerra, D.D.S. – NODA President*



camaraderie and celebration. A special thanks to Dr. Frank Martello for giving the invocation and to Dr. Brant Schmidt for serving as our Master of Ceremonies—you both played an essential role in making the night memorable. I also want to extend my congratulations to Dr. Byron Ganucheau, recipient of the 2024 Honor Dentist Award. This well-deserved recognition honors his years of dedicated practice and service to both dentistry and the community.

Looking ahead, the New Orleans Dental Conference & Louisiana Dental Association's Annual Session is just around the corner on April 10th and 11th. Dr. James Burns and his committee have put together an outstanding program, and I encourage all members to attend. It's always a fantastic opportunity to learn, connect, and grow within our profession. Additionally, the LDA House of Delegates will convene on Saturday, April 12th. Thank you to all the members who have stepped

up to represent NODA—it's through your efforts that our collective voice remains strong.

I'm also excited to announce that NODA is proud to sponsor the First Annual Miles for Smiles 5K, benefiting the LSU Health Sciences Center School of Dentistry in New Orleans. The race will take place on Sunday, April 13th, at Bucktown Marina, and proceeds will support the student dental clinic at Ozanam Inn. A strong show of support from our local dental community would be a great reflection on NODA, so I encourage everyone to participate!

Finally, don't forget to mark your calendars for NODA's Annual Crawfish Party on May 9th at the Kamp in Harahan. This is always a fun and relaxed gathering, so bring your family, your staff, and your appetite!

As always, thank you for your commitment to NODA and to the profession of dentistry. I look forward to seeing many of you at these upcoming events!

Spring is in the air, and I hope everyone had a fun and safe Mardi Gras and St. Patrick's Day season! As we step into this new season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible gatherings we've had and the exciting events ahead.

First, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended the President's Banquet last month. It was a wonderful evening of



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NODC/LDA Annual Session 2025

“Let’s get geauxing”

by James Burns, D.D.S. – NODC/LDA Annual Session Committee Chair

Hello, my NODA Family.

We are at the eve of the New Orleans Dental Conference & Louisiana Dental Association’s Annual Session 2025. If you are reading this before April 10th or 11th and haven’t registered, it’s never too late. You can still register at NODC.org. We also have walk-up registration available. By this time, I’ve just about explained to you all why our Conference is extremely important to the survival of our Local Association. This Conference, that I have personally

been a part of for more years that I care to admit, has and always will be the Crown Jewel of the New Orleans Dental Association. Over the years many people on the NODC committee have come and gone, but I can honestly say, to this day, I consider each and every one of them a good friend. We all share one thing in common. We all love this conference as well as our association and I consider our conference our personal love letter to our constituents. I would be remiss if I didn’t present to y’all my committee. My committee means



the world to me and believe they are the best in the business.

We hope to see all of you April 10th and 11th at the Astor Crowne Plaza. We are all there to help you have a great time while getting the best CE. Have a great day!

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Oromandibular Dystonia: A Dental Perspective on Movement Disorders

Hanyu You, Pre-dental student at Tulane University



Oromandibular Dystonia (OMD) is a rare neuromuscular movement disorder affecting different parts of the oromandibular region(1). It is characterized by involuntary, forceful contraction of the masticatory muscles, facial muscles, and lingual muscles, leading to abnormal jaw movement and posture(1). The exact etiology remains uncertain. A combination of genetic susceptibility, CNS dysfunction, and peripheral triggers (including dental interventions and trauma) may all contribute to the development of OMD(2). The prevalence of OMD is low, estimated at up to about 6.9 per 100,000 people (2), but its impact on oral function and quality of life can be profound. In dentistry, it holds particular significance since uncontrolled movement can damage oral structures and make the dental care process complicated. Moreover, dental treatments themselves have occasionally been

implicated as potential triggers for OMD onset (2). The following article reviews several oral health impacts of Oromandibular Dystonia and further examines its unique implications for musicians.

Tooth Wear and Structural Damage

OMD often leads to persistent jaw clenching or grinding. Over time, this can result in significant tooth wear (attrition) and can even fracture teeth or dental restorations (3). One clinical study involving 240 patients with OMD noted “dental impairment” (excessive wear or early tooth loss) in about 17% of total patients, particularly those with jaw-closing dystonia, likely due to hyperactive masticatory muscles causing constant tooth contact(4). In extreme cases, the chronic abnormal forces can even cause skeletal injuries. For example, a case report detailed a 56-year-old male with oromandibular dystonia who, despite no external trauma, experienced pathologic mandibular fractures and loosening of teeth due to severe dystonic clenching and bruxism, requiring multiple surgical interventions(5).

Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMD)

Chronic involuntary spasms in OMD frequently produce TMD-like signs such as jaw/facial pain, TMJ joint sounds, and limited jaw opening(3). In fact, a retrospective study found that nearly every OMD patient in its sample had been diagnosed with a TMD (usually myofascial

pain of the jaw muscles), and many had even undergone orthodontic treatment or TMJ surgeries in an attempt to relieve symptoms(6). This overlap can potentially lead to misdiagnosis, which means patients may be treated for TMD while the underlying dystonia goes unrecognized(6).

Oral Hygiene Challenges and Periodontal Health

Performing routine oral hygiene can be very challenging for patients with generalized dystonia, especially when oromandibular regions are affected. Involuntary jaw and tongue movements, jaw deviation, or limited mouth opening associated with pain may further hinder effective tooth brushing and flossing(7). Patients often have difficulty controlling plaque buildup, which increases their risk for dental caries as well as periodontal disease over time(7). For example, one case report of a generalized dystonia patient noted heavy plaque and subgingival caries due to motor limitations, and the care team introduced adaptive aids includes electric toothbrush and floss holders to improve daily dental hygiene, alongside periodontal treatment(2).

Masticatory Dysfunction and Nutritional Implications

Severe OMD often impairs basic oral functions like chewing and swallowing. Patients may have difficulty properly masticating food and may even choke or struggle

Continued on Page 4

Oromandibular Dystonia: A Dental Perspective on Movement Disorders . . . *Continued from Page 3*

to swallow (dysphagia) due to uncoordinated tongue and jaw movements(7). As a consequence, they might avoid certain hard or fibrous foods like fruits, vegetables, or meats because these could be too challenging to chew, leading to an imbalanced, carb-heavy, or soft diet(7). This dietary limitation not only risks nutritional deficiencies but can also increase caries risk because softer or high-carb foods tend to be more cariogenic(8). It is important that when OMD patients show significant swallowing difficulties, it is recommended that the patient undergo a formal swallowing evaluation and nutritional assessment to monitor their nutritional status(9).

Impact on Musicians

Special consideration is given to musicians who make a living through precise control of the jaw, tongue, and facial muscles, such as vocalists and wind instrument players. Specifically for wind instrumentalists, OMD can manifest as embouchure dystonia(10), which is a task-specific dystonia affecting muscles of the face and jaw used to play wind instruments(11). Key symptoms include involuntary contractions of the embouchure muscles, sometimes manifesting as tremors, leading to loss of fine motor control in the lips and jaw(12). Musicians being affected struggle with tone production, articulation and endurance, and the condition often forces them to curtail or end their careers(13). Focal dystonia is estimated to affect 2%-10% of professional musicians,

with embouchure dystonia accounting for 14%(14). Suspected risk factors include repetitive overuse from intensive practice, high-precision performance demands, psychological stress, and orofacial muscle injury(10). Dental professionals who encounter unexplained embouchure tremors or jaw spasms should consider dystonia, rather than a dental issue.

Conclusion:

Public awareness, along with awareness within the dental profession, is important for the recognition and treatment of Oromandibular Dystonia (OMD), which, although rare, can severely impact daily function and well-being. A multidisciplinary approach involving dental professionals and neurologists can be beneficial in managing such conditions. For vocalists and musicians, particularly those who play wind instruments, OMD can be career-threatening and, along with other dental issues, may also significantly affect performance and career longevity. In New Orleans, a city rich in musical heritage, musicians, especially wind instrumentalists, should be aware of their oral health and seek appropriate care when needed.

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President's Banquet — Southern Yacht Club

Photos courtesy of Dr. Kristi Soileau



Master of Ceremonies Dr. Brant Schmidt presents Dr. Gregory Guerra with 2025 President's gavel.



LDA President Dr. Lance Savoie presents NODA Immediate Past President Dr. Linda Cao with Past President's Award.



Dr. David Hildebrandt presents Dr. Byron Ganucheau with 2024 Honor Dentist Award.



LDA President Dr. Lance Savoie with 2025 NODA Officers & Directors: Dr. Brant Schmidt (At-Large), Dr. Gregory Guerra (President), Dr. Linda Cao (Immediate Past President), Dr. David DeGenova (Treasurer), Dr. Emily Eggart (Secretary), Dr. Robert Camenzuli (At-Large), Dr. Jorge Rodriguez (Director to LDA), Dr. Marc Fruithandler (At-Large), Dr. Gizelle Richard (Alternate Director to LDA), Dr. Kevin Collins (Alternate Director to LDA). Not pictured: Dr. Claudia Cavallino (President Elect), Dr. Hillary Wright (1st Vice President), Dr. Zachary Tanenbaum (2nd Vice President), Dr. Glenn Dubroc, Jr. (Director to LDA).



LDA President Dr. Lance Savoie presents the LDA 25-year Tribute Award to Dr. Gregory Guerra, Dr. Robert Camenzuli, and Dr. Brant Schmidt with LDA Executive Director Annette Drodgy.

Daniel J. Buksa, JD, CAE, Named Executive Director Academy of General Dentistry Selects Long-term Leader to Move Organization Forward



said Chethan Chetty, DDS, MAGD, AGD president. “Dan’s deep knowledge of AGD, combined with his extensive leadership experience, uniquely positions him to guide our organization as we continue to evolve and adapt to the needs of our members. His commitment to our mission and his proven track record in public affairs and strategic leadership will undoubtedly drive AGD to new heights, ensuring that we provide support to all general dentists.”

As executive director, Buksa will oversee the strategic, operational, financial, and governance aspects of AGD. His vision and leadership will guide the organization and important initiatives to enhance how dentists engage with the AGD and its high-quality programs, services, and benefits.

“I am humbled and honored by the AGD Board’s confidence in my leadership,” said Buksa. “I look forward to working alongside the AGD team to advance the mission and vision of the Academy, supporting our members and,

in turn, enhancing the care they provide to their patients.”

Buksa’s long history with AGD includes multiple key roles. His experience as associate executive director of public affairs, dating back to 2006, has been instrumental in shaping AGD’s policies and public presence. He joined the organization as an advocacy manager in 1997 and later served as the director of general dentistry representation until 2006.

Buksa earned his JD from Valparaiso University in 1993 and served in the U.S. Army from 1984 to 1988. He is a certified association executive (CAE) from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

Outside of his work with AGD, Buksa serves as an elected trustee on the board of the Catholic Order of Foresters, a mid-sized fraternal life insurance company. He is also active in the American Legion, where he currently serves as post judge advocate and has previously held the position of commander.

Buksa and his wife are parents to five children.

Chicago, IL - The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) named Daniel J. Buksa, JD, CAE, as its new executive director. Buksa, who has served as interim executive director since October 2024, officially stepped into the role this month. He possesses a deep understanding of the needs of AGD members and general dentists, having served AGD for over 25 years.

“We are thrilled to offer Dan the role as the new executive director of the Academy of General Dentistry,”

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March General Membership Meeting The Ridgeway of Old Metairie

Photos courtesy of NODA Staff



NODA President Dr. Gregory Guerra, speaker Dr. Michael Block



Dr. Hillary Wright, sponsor representative Joey Mollere @ Zimvie.



Dr. Gregory Guerra presents Dr. Melinda Hickey with the LDA 25-year Tribute Award.



Dr. Elise Ehland receives new membership certificate from Dr. Gregory Guerra.



Dr. Tiffany Morgan receives new membership certificate from Dr. Gregory Guerra.



Tiffany Ebersole (Hancock Whitney sponsor representative), raffle drawing winner Dr. Jacob McInnis, Robert Hopkins (Hancock Whitney sponsor representative).



Dr. Gregory Guerra (NODE gift card winner), Dr. Kevin Collins.

March General Membership Meeting The Ridgeway of Old Metairie

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Dr. Vincent DiLeo, Jr. (NODE gift card winner), Dr. Kevin Collins.



Dr. Jorge Rodriguez, Dr. Tiffany Morgan, Dr. Parker Ball.



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Dr. Elise Ehland, Dr. John Ward, Dr. Michael Giorlando.



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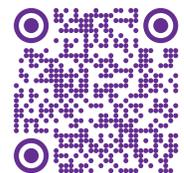
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30% of practice income as many services are referred out. 2023 gross was \$674,000 and projected net income after payments is over \$200,000 from a purchaser production level of just \$480,000. That's 43% after all expenses and loan payments. If you don't mind a slower, easier, less stressful way of life, with a low overhead, be sure to look this opportunity over. For more information, contact Dr. Earl Douglas at earl@adssouth.com or 770/664-1982.

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Gross Collections - \$829,126, six (6) equipped operatories, 4,000 sq. ft. This well-established, but modern eleven year plus standing practice is located in western New Orleans. The practice is well-staffed and uses Dentrix management software. There were over 2,500 patients seen in the past eighteen months and the practice sees 25 new patients per month. The dentist is booked two and a half weeks in advance. The 4,000 sq. ft. office with six equipped ops and four more plumbed, but unequipped ops is available for purchase. This is an ideal base for merging more practices into this spacious office. Hygienists are responsible for 23% of practice income as many services are referred out. Projected 2024 gross is \$800,000. For more information, contact Dr. Earl Douglas at 770/664-1982 or earl@adssouth.com.

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SATURDAY GENERAL DENTISTS

Louisiana Dental Center is seeking General Dentists interested in working Saturdays at its locations throughout South Louisiana. If you're interested in joining our team of professionals, please contact Terry Ernst at 985/893-2240 or ternst@LaDentalCenter.com.

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