Oral and sialochemical findings in patients with autoimmune rheumatic disease

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ABSTRACT. Forty-two patients with autoimmune rheumatic diseases were evaluated for oral-dental findings and a biopsy of labial minor salivary glands was obtained. Stimulated parotid salivary gland function was assessed and levels of total protein, chloride and albumin in these secretions measured. The patients were stratified into three groups according to the severity of labial gland histopathology (normal histology, 1+ and 2+). Individuals with chronic inflammatory disease of the minor salivary glands had no decrease in stimulated parotid salivary flow but were found to have a greater incidence of oral soft tissue changes commonly associated with salivary dysfunction.

However, there were no statistically significant differences in total protein or chloride levels between the groups and no albumin was detected in any samples. These data suggest that stimulated parotid function may be a poor indicator of the extent of salivary involvement in individuals with autoimmune-mediated salivary gland disease.