



# Oral Medicine 50 Years, Beginning of a New Era

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This year, the Korean Academy of Orofacial Pain and Oral Medicine (KAOPOM) celebrates its 50th anniversary. The KAOPOM has been established on October 30, 1972. Although the society was founded the latest among the societies of the dental specialties in Korea, it has achieved remarkable growth than any other societies, and now stands tall as the most prestigious dental society in Korea.

At the beginning, the academy was established as the name of Korean Academy of Oral Medicine (KAOM), and the scope of the academy was to further the advancement and understanding of oral mucosal diseases and management of medically compromised patients through scientific study related to the dental field. Until the late 1970s, the management of temporomandibular disorder was done at several different departments such as departments of oral medicine, oral and maxillofacial surgery, or prosthodontics. After the middle of 1980s, many researches on temporomandibular disorder and orofacial pain, and translations of textbooks regarding these fields were done by faculties of the KAOM, and in Korea the main research and clinical trial of this field have been performed by the KAOM groups. The original Korean textbooks of oral medicine including oral diagnosis, management of medically compromised patients, treatment of temporomandibular disorder and orofacial pain, and forensic dentistry have been written from the late of 1990s. The name of the academy was changed into Korean Academy of Orofacial Pain and Oral Medicine in

2007.

In the 1980s, certified training programs in oral medicine spread throughout Korea and, as a result, the founding members of oral medicine recognized the need for an examining board to establish uniformity of training for oral medicine residencies. The first oral medicine board exam was held in 2005 by the KAOM. After 3 years, oral medicine specialty, based on approval of the application submitted by the Korean Board of Oral Medicine by the KAOPOM to the Korean Board of Dental Specialties by Ministry of Health and Welfare in 2008.

Now, the academy has broadened the field of oral medicine to professional organization of dentists and allied health care providers, dedicated to alleviating pain and suffering through the promotion of excellence in education, research, and patient care in the field of temporomandibular disorders, orofacial pain and associated disorders, dental sleep medicine, and forensic dentistry.

To my knowledge, there are few countries in the world that systematically develop the field of oral medicine and include all fields related to the field of dental science. The society also expanded the field of dentistry and changed the public and medical doctors' cognition of dentistry. Scopes and definition of oral medicine are not the same everywhere as, for example, in the United Kingdom, oral medicine is defined as 'the specialty of dentistry concerned with the oral health of patients with chronic, recurrent and

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medically-related disorders of the oral and maxillofacial region, and with their diagnosis and nonsurgical management,' whereas in the USA, oral medicine is 'the specialty of dentistry concerned with the oral healthcare of medically complex patients and with the diagnosis and non-surgical management of medically-related disorders or conditions affecting the oral and maxillofacial region.' In Korea, the specialty of oral medicine includes 'non-surgical management of diseases occurring in the oral cavity and surrounding tissues, professional treatment for orofacial pain and temporomandibular disorders, management of oral symptoms caused by systemic diseases, dental treatment and management of patients with systemic diseases, and treatment of sleep-disordered breathing, and forensic dentistry.'

Recently more accurate diagnosis and development of more rational interventions and management strategies will be based on an integrated approach to the study of oral medicine. Molecular and physiological mechanisms of oral diseases and orofacial pain disorders need to be investigated in both *in vitro* and *in vivo* assays, and additionally the clinical big data and the artificial intelligence technique

also should be taken into consideration as the essential clinical modalities of diagnosis. Multidisciplinary efforts and the formation of research collaborations will likely be necessary to continue our advancement in the understanding of pathology and diagnosis of oral diseases and orofacial pain disorders.

Building upon the development of oral medicine over the past 50 years, it is also essential to strategically align the future of multidisciplinary collaborative oral medicine with the scientific principles and healthcare policy strategies developed by national and international institutions. Synergistic coordination among the various interested bodies is the logical next step toward achieving this alignment.

We celebrate oral medicine 50 years, and are at the beginning of a new era.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.