A CLINICAL AND RADIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTED MANDIBULAR 3RD MOLAR – FOR SURGICAL PLANNING

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INTRODUCTION

The dates and sequences of tooth eruption varies in various races. It is universally seen that the third molars are the last to erupt in all races. Darwin and others believed that the third molars have a tendency to become vestigeal in the more civilized races of man and will be lost over a period of time.

On the other hand other workers observed that the third molar is not a tooth which would generally disappear from the human dentition but probably remain in a rudimentary condition.

Thus an impacted tooth is one that fails to erupt into the dental arch within its normal chronological time. The tooth becomes impacted because eruption is prevented by adjacent teeth, bone and soft tissue overlying it. If impacted teeth don't erupt they may under go pathological changes and are retained through out the patients lifetime unless otherwise removed surgically[2].

Now a days the most common oral surgical procedure done is the removal of impacted wisdom teeth, a procedure which requires a sound understanding of the surgical principles and diagnosis. The surgeon who performs such procedure applies knowledge acquired from many aspects of dental education including anatomy, physiology, pathology and radiology.