

Letter to the Editor**TOOTH LOSS: MISSING TOOTH REPLACEMENT OPTIONS****Osadolor OO^{1*}**¹Department of Child Dental Health, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku-Ozalla, Enugu State, Nigeria.

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Keywords: Tooth loss, Missing tooth, Replacement options, Tooth.**Cite this article:** Osadolor OO. Tooth loss: missing tooth replacement options. Yen Med J. 2021;3(1):1–2.**Dear Editor,**

Tooth loss is a condition where one tooth, two or more teeth or all teeth are lost from the socket in the alveolar bone. It can occur in children, adolescent, adults and elderly individuals. Anterior teeth are important for biting, speech and aesthetics while posterior teeth are for mastication (chewing). Tooth loss is a major consequence of dental caries and periodontal disease.¹ Other causes of tooth loss²⁻⁵ include trauma, orthodontic consideration, prosthetic reasons, supernumerary teeth, pericoronitis, impaction, hypoplasia, neoplasm, tooth wear lesions etc. Tooth loss in children can be due to natural physiological resorption (tooth exfoliation) in the primary dentition, or as a result of trauma (avulsion) or extraction. Premature tooth loss can be hereditary or systemic in origin.⁵

Social factors such as education, income, oral hygiene practices, tobacco consumption, have been reported to affect tooth loss.^{3,6} Tooth loss could be an indicator of the severity of oral diseases experienced by an individual or a population.⁴ Tooth loss has also been reported to vary from one part of the world to another and within the same country; it differs from rural and urban dwellers.³ Tooth loss can be through the process of trauma, exfoliation or extraction.⁶ The pattern of tooth loss in an environment is a reflection of cultural values as well as the availability, standard of care, cost and utilization of both preventive and curative dental care in a population.^{1,4} The loss of anterior teeth could affect speech and aesthetics, other effects of tooth loss.^{1,2,5,7,8} are drifting of adjacent teeth into the edentulous space, supra-eruption of opposing teeth to the edentulous space and compromised function. In order to prevent or reduce the negative consequences of complete or partial tooth loss, various forms of

prosthodontic treatment (tooth replacement) have been recommended as the clinical standard of care.

The options for replacement of missing tooth/teeth include⁸⁻¹⁰ removable partial denture (immediate or conventional), removable complete dentures, fixed dentures (bridges), overdentures, dental implants, implants supported complete denture, implants supported overdenture and implants retained complete denture. These various replacement options vary in terms of cost. Aesthetics has been reported as a reason for anterior teeth replacement.⁸ In this environment, removable partial dentures are the most commonly⁸⁻¹⁰ preferred prostheses and could be as a result of its ease of fabrication and cost, when compared with the cost of other replacement options. The option of fixed dental prosthesis (bridges) could be limited by cost, patient choice and patient motivation. Metal based dentures can be fabricated from Gold, Cobalt-chromium alloys and other noble metals. Acrylic dentures have excellent appearance, reproduces surface details, and can be easily manipulated and repaired when fractured. Acrylic removable partial dentures are the most commonly provided prostheses⁸⁻¹⁰ and could be as a result of patient choice, cost and its ease of fabrication. The option of dental implants could be limited by systemic or oral conditions, finance, patient choice, patient motivation and level of awareness.

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