The use of dental implants to support prostheses is a widely accepted treatment modality with high success and predictability. The importance of peri-implant bone stability around implants for the success and longevity of treatment is always emphasized. There are many factors that could affect alveolar bone stability around implants, one of them is soft tissue thickness. Vertical soft tissue thickness which is measured at the occlusal aspect of the alveolar ridge could also be an important factor that affects the crestal bone level around implants. The recent development of radiological imaging in the form of cone-beam computed tomography (CBCT) provides a precise demonstration of anatomical structures. This research project will measure pre-implant CBCT images and collect epidemiological data to study if there is any correlation between cortical bone thickness and vertical soft tissue thickness. It would be helpful for clinicians to know the average range of vertical tissue thickness and if it is related to cortical bone thickness in order to generate knowledge that can improve treatment protocols and implant outcomes.

**Methods**

- Partially edentulous adult patients, who had a CBCT taken before implant placement and that were treated with single implant supported crown at the Comprehensive Care Clinic of ECU SoDM, were identified.
- Cross-section CBCT image at the center of each edentulous site was measured using Invivo 6.0.3 software.
- Factors were evaluated on CBCT as follows:
  - Thickness of vertical soft tissue at alveolar crest;
  - Thickness of buccal cortical plate 5 mm apical to crest;
- The importance of peri-implant bone stability around implants for the success and longevity of treatment is always emphasized.
- We can only measure soft tissue, but not hard tissue, of the remaining 38 because they had a bone graft.
- CBCT scans could be used to study vertical soft tissue thickness at crestal area of alveolar ridge although the measurement might not be as accurate as clinical measurement or digital scan superimposition.
- Patients whose CBCT scans were not clear enough to measure soft tissue were excluded, the contour of vertical soft tissue can be viewed in CBCT scans with a small field of view.
- Mean thickness of cortical bone at alveolar crest was 0.87 mm. Results of this study did not show a correlation between vertical soft tissue thickness and hard tissue measurements.
- Vertical soft tissue thickness compared by gender, age, and ethnic group did not show statistical significance.
- However, results indicated incisor sites had significantly thicker vertical soft tissue than posterior sites.

**Conclusion**

- The vertical soft tissue of edentulous sites was found to be relatively thin (<3 mm) overall. Initial analysis shows incisor sites may have thicker vertical soft tissue than posterior sites.
- The correlation between hard tissue thickness and vertical soft tissue thickness was generally not significant.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the ECU School of Dental Medicine and Brody School of Medicine for its continued support of the Summer Scholars Research Program. A special thanks to all of the mentors who helped make this research project as seamless as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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**CBCT Analysis of Vertical Soft Tissue Thickness Before Dental Implant Placement and Its Relationship with Cortical Bone Thickness**

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