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Chapter

Frontiers in the Understanding of Peri-Implant Disease

Alexandre Perez and Tommaso Lombardi

Abstract

Peri-implant diseases are plaque-associated pathologic condition characterized by the inflammatory process affecting hard and soft tissues around endosseous dental implants. These frequent complications are the result of an imbalance between the host response and bacterial challenge, which may affect the peri-implant mucosa “mucositis” or also involve the supporting bone “peri-implantitis”. Clinical aspects/signs of peri-implant diseases should be detected at each recall visit as well as swelling, erythema, bleeding on probing and suppuration. Moreover, many risk factors are involved in the development of peri-implant disease and most patients may have multiple risk factors including smoking, substance use disorders, socio-economic status, mental health disorders, old age and poor home dental care. In addition, iatrogenic, local, systemic, type of prosthesis and implant site-specific factors have been involved in the development of such complication. Clinicians must be aware of and recognizes the importance of such risk factors in order to manage them appropriately. This chapter aims to provide clinicians with an up-to-date understanding of peri-implant disease.

Keywords: peri-implantitis, peri-implant mucositis, dental implants, periodontal disease, treatment

1. Introduction

1.1 The growing penetration of dental implant therapy

Dental implant therapy has been established as a predictable and effective treatment option for replacing missing teeth. Cumulative survival rates of implant-borne restorations range from 90.5–100% after 5 years and 85.5–100% after 10 years, reflecting remarkably low failure rates—as low as 0 to 1.56 or 2 per 100 placed implants, respectively [1–6]. Recent systematic reviews have estimated a total survival rate of 96.4% [6]. Furthermore, by carefully adopting patient and case selection criteria, immediate implant protocols—traditionally considered challenging—may today be realized with the comparable survival rates to those of conventional delayed approaches [7–9]. Encouraging long-term success rates and evolving treatment strategies have contributed to the rapid growth and global acceptance of dental

implant therapy, with an estimated 12–15 million implants placed worldwide in 2023 [10]. Similarly, the prevalence of U.S. citizens rehabilitated with dental implants has increased at an annual rate of approximately 14%, rising from 5.7% in 2016 to a projected 23% by 2026 [11]. This substantial and growing proportion of the population rehabilitated with dental implants underscores the significance of implant therapy as a topic of increasing epidemiological and public health relevance.

The growing adoption of dental implant therapy has prompted an evolution in its evaluation criteria. Early success benchmarks, as defined by Albrektsson et al. in 1986, primarily focused on functional outcomes such as implant survival, prosthetic stability, radiographic bone loss and absence of peri-implant infection [12]. More recently, these criteria have expanded to include peri-implant soft tissue health, natural esthetics, prosthodontic performance and patient-centred outcomes such as satisfaction—reflecting a modern, multidimensional approach to assessing long-term implant success [13–16].

1.2 Dental implant complications, biological complications and their interplay

Despite their established long-term success, dental implant restorations are not complications-free. Dental implant complications are commonly classified into biological, technical and esthetic complications [5, 17, 18]. They may arise at any stage of treatment—whether during planning, surgery or implant function—and are influenced by various factors, including material and prosthetic design, anatomical constraints, unforeseen treatment plan deviations and patient-related systemic or behavioral aspects [17, 19–22]. For example, implant positioning and prosthetic design factors have been associated with long-term biological complications, suggesting a causal interplay between different types of implant-related complications [21–23].

Biological complications, that is peri-implant disease, represent the most common type of implant-related complication resulting in implant loss, followed by implant fracture and prosthetic overload. Notably, a potential association—regardless of causal direction—between mechanical and biological complications cannot be excluded [24].

1.3 Understanding and defining the clinical picture and diagnostic criteria of peri-implant disease

Peri-implant disease encompasses a spectrum of progressive inflammatory conditions of the peri-implant soft and/or hard tissues [25, 26]. Notably, the disease often progresses silently, remaining asymptomatic and undetectable by the patient [27]. Compounding this issue, many implant patients remain largely uneducated about potential complications, limiting early self-recognition outside of clinical examinations [28]. Despite the lack of overt symptoms, peri-implant disease is characterized by gradual and progressive tissue deterioration that can lead to esthetic and functional impairments up to the complete loss of the restoration [26].

Peri-implant disease is classified into two stages: peri-implant mucositis and peri-implantitis. Peri-implant mucositis is characterized by reversible inflammation of the peri-implant soft tissues. Peri-implantitis, on the other hand, involves inflammation of both soft and hard tissues accompanied by progressive and accelerating loss of supporting bone [25, 29].

Over the past decades, the scientific community has made the repeated efforts to standardize and refine the diagnostic criteria for peri-implant diseases.

Albrektsson and Isidor defined peri-implant mucositis as a reversible inflammation of the soft tissues as opposed to peri-implantitis being diagnosed by the irreversible and progressive loss of supporting bone [30]. Subsequent consensus reports, including those by Linde and Meyle and Zitzmann and Berglundh in 2008, defined peri-implant disease based on clinical indicators such as bleeding on probing (BoP) and radiographic bone loss [31, 32]. Lang and Berglundh extended these definitions within the broader context of tissue-level changes [33]. The 2017 World Workshop on the Classification of Periodontal and Peri-implant Diseases provided the most recent and potentially most comprehensive and clinically applicable criteria to date differentiating Peri-Implant Mucositis and Peri-Implantitis from Peri-Implant Health (**Figure 1, Table 1**) [14, 33, 34].

In clinical practice, it is important to recognize that a certain degree of marginal bone remodeling after implant placement and prosthetic loading is part of the normal physiological adaptation and should be expected [12, 35]. Seminal reports on crestal bone changes following prosthetic restoration in two-stage surgical protocols with delayed loading established that up to 1.5 mm of bone loss in the first year after loading and less than 0.2 mm annually thereafter may be considered within the range of physiological remodeling [12, 14, 36]. While these thresholds prevail as general clinical indicators, contemporary consensus emphasizes the importance of temporal stability in peri-implant bone levels rather than strict adherence to absolute values [14]. Progressive bone loss beyond initial remodeling, particularly when associated

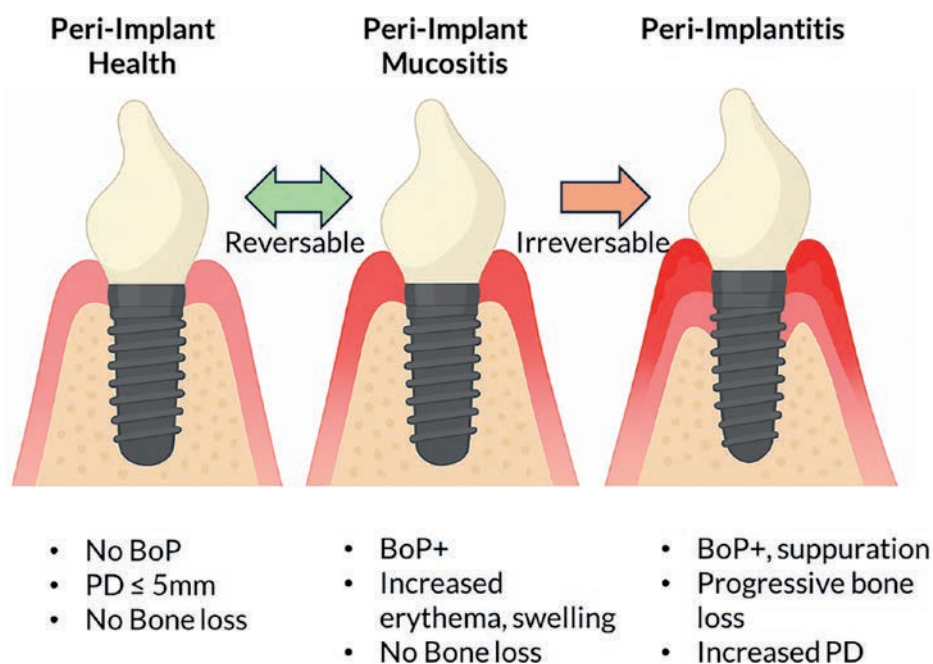


Figure 1. Schematic illustration comparing peri-implant health, peri-implant mucositis, and peri-implantitis. Healthy peri-implant tissues characterize peri-implant health, no bleeding on probing (BoP), normal probing depth within normal ranges, and no radiographic bone loss. Peri-implant mucositis presents with BoP, increased erythema, and swelling of the soft tissues but without bone loss; this condition is considered reversible upon appropriate intervention. In contrast, peri-implantitis is associated with BoP and/or suppuration, progressive marginal bone loss, and increased probing depths; this condition is considered irreversible and requires surgical intervention.

Authors	Peri-implant mucositis		Peri-implantitis	
	Key features	Clinical parameters	Key features	Clinical parameters
Albrektsson & Isidor [30]	Reversible; only soft tissues	Soft tissue inflammation only	Irreversible inflammation and progressive bone loss	Mobility, radiographic bone loss, inflammation
Lindhe & Meyle [31]	BoP+; inflammation	No radiographic bone loss; BoP+	Inflammation with bone loss	BoP+ / suppuration; radiographic bone loss
Zitzmann & Berglundh [32]	BoP without bone loss beyond normal remodeling	BoP+, stable bone level	Bone loss beyond expected remodeling	Probing depth increase; radiographic bone loss
Lang & Berglundh [33]	Inflammation; reversible upon therapy	BoP+, no additional bone loss; inflammation present	Inflammation of both soft and hard tissues with bone loss	Increased probing depth, recession, bone loss
World Workshop / Berglundh & Armitage [14]	BoP+ and/or suppuration without bone loss beyond normal remodeling	BoP+, Probing depth may increase, but bone levels remain stable	BoP+ / suppuration, increased probing depth, and bone loss ≥ 3 mm	BoP+, PD ≥ 5 mm, bone level ≥ 3 mm apical of implant shoulder

BoP+: positive bleeding on probing, *PD*: probing depth.

Table 1. Key features and clinical parameters of peri-implant mucositis and peri-implantitis.

with clinical signs of inflammation, indicates peri-implant disease. Regular diagnostic follow-ups, including clinical and radiographic examinations compared to baseline post-loading, remain central to early detection [33]. The maintenance of stable, unremarkable peri-implant soft and hard tissue conditions—characterized by the absence of excessive radiographic bone loss, inflammation and the presence of healthy, keratinized epithelium—supports peri-implant health and can be regarded as a leitmotif in the clinical diagnostic for long-term peri-implant health (Table 2) [37].

Despite the development of refined diagnostic criteria and their importance in standardizing the research on disease prevalence in epidemiological and disease surveillance studies, the clinical and biological heterogeneity in tissue response, disease progression and defect morphology continues to present challenges—not necessarily in recognizing peri-implant disease itself, but in adequately classifying its severity, progression and clinical therapeutic approaches [38–41]. Unlike, for example periodontitis and other pathological conditions that benefit from established staging systems, current definitions of peri-implant diseases remain largely binary [42, 43]. Future research efforts may contribute to developing more differentiated grading systems, enabling improved prognostic accuracy and refined therapeutic approaches (Figure 2).

1.4 Epidemiology of peri-implant disease

In epidemiology, two fundamental metrics are used to characterize disease patterns: prevalence and incidence. Prevalence describes the proportion of individuals affected by a condition at a specific point or over a defined period, while incidence refers to the number of new cases that arise within a specified timeframe. Together, these measures

Time after implant loading	Expected bone level changes
First-year	≤ 1.5 mm
After the first year	≤ 0.2 mm per year

Table 2.
Time after implant loading and expected level changes.

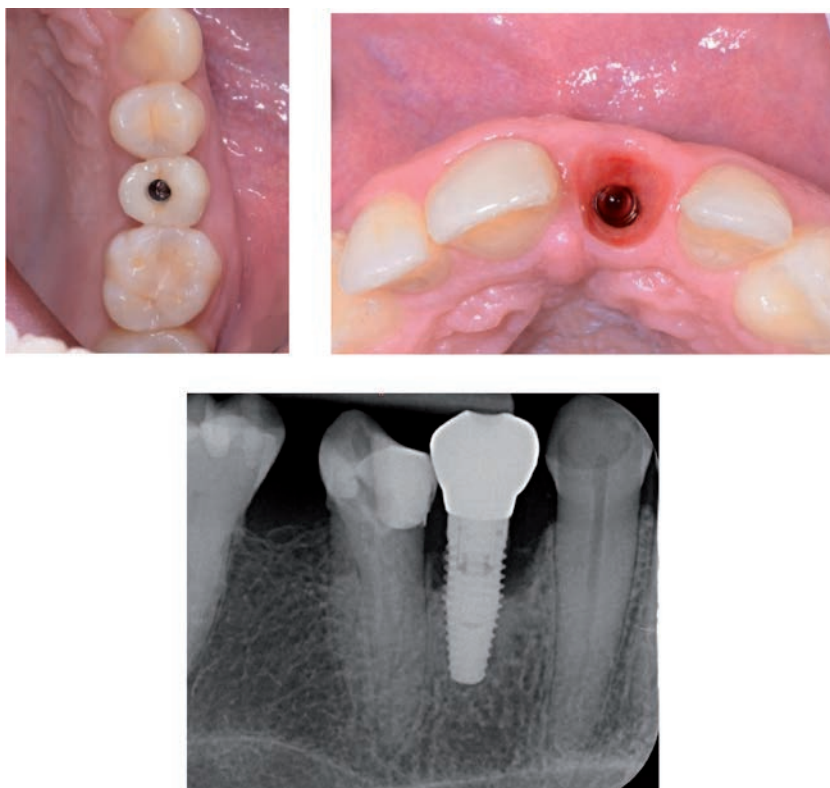


Figure 2.
Screw-retained single-unit crown placement site 25 showing good peri-implant health (top left), peri-implant mucositis highlighted after removal of a crown site 21 (top right) and peri-implantitis site 44 on intraoral radiography.

provide insight into the burden and dynamics of peri-implant disease within a given population. They may be assessed at the implant level (implant-based) or at the patient level (subject-based), offering a more nuanced understanding of both peri-implantitis and peri-implant mucositis across diverse clinical and patient-centred contexts.

The reported prevalence of peri-implant diseases varies considerably across clinical studies. Comprehensive systematic reviews published in 2015 and 2017 reported that the patient-level prevalence of peri-implant mucositis ranges from 19 to 65% and that of peri-implantitis from 1 to 47% [44]. Calculated average and weighted prevalence estimates derived from meta-analytical approaches may offer a more tangible indication of the overall epidemiological burden of peri-implant diseases. Based on aggregated data from multiple cross-sectional studies, peri-implant mucositis affects approximately 1 in 2 patients (43–47%), while peri-implantitis is observed in about 1 in 5 patients (20–22%) [44, 45].

The weighted mean prevalence of peri-implantitis at the implant level is estimated at 9.3%, compared to 19.8% at the patient level [45]. This discrepancy highlights the greater clinical impact of subject-based prevalence, as individual patients often present with multiple implants.

The considerable variability in the reported prevalence rates of peri-implant diseases can be attributed to several methodological and clinical factors. One of the most critical sources of inconsistency is the lack of standardized case definitions and diagnostic criteria across studies—particularly regarding parameters such as marginal bone levels [46]. This gap was rectified by the 2017 World Workshop on the Classification of Periodontal and Peri-Implant Diseases and Conditions, which introduced consensus-based diagnostic criteria for both disease entities [14, 34].

Incidence data of peri-implantitis are less well documented but indicate a relatively consistent trend [47–52]. It is further important to consider that the incidence of peri-implant disease has been demonstrated to increase with time in function [48, 50, 52]. While longitudinal studies have reported a patient-level cumulative incidence from 14.5 to 22% over 9 to 10 years following implant placement, other investigations have documented higher annual incidence rates of up to 16% per patient-year [50–52].

Finally, clinician surveys confirm peri-implant diseases as a frequently encountered complication in clinical practice [41]. Specifically, surveys among US periodontologists indicated that up to 10% of implants required to be removed due to peri-implantitis. This finding highlights a significant unmet need for effective, evidence-based treatment protocols, underscoring the ongoing clinical challenge of managing peri-implant disease.

1.5 Plaque and biofilm association of peri-implant disease and differences between implant-associated and tooth-associated biofilm

Strong evidence suggests that bacterial biofilms represent the most important etiological factor for the onset and progression of peri-implant disease [14, 33]. Clinical studies have demonstrated a direct causal effect of biofilm accumulation on triggering a peri-implant inflammatory tissue response, with a significant dose-dependent association [53–56]. Full mouth plaque scores above 25% have, for example, correlated with a greater prevalence of peri-implantitis in patients with a history of periodontitis [57]. In contrast, anti-infective therapy has demonstrated efficacious in reducing peri-implant soft tissue inflammation and arresting disease progression [58]. In addition, ligature-induced preclinical models have advanced the understanding of peri-implantitis by clearly demonstrating the role of infectious bacterial biofilms in driving the progressive inflammatory breakdown of peri-implant soft tissues and alveolar bone, specifically on a histological level [59].

Compared to orthopedic implants, osseointegrated dental implants feature a transmucosal design penetrating the oral mucosa, establishing a direct interface between the peri-implant tissues—particularly the alveolar bone—and the bacteria-rich oral environment. This anatomical configuration increases their susceptibility to biofilm accumulation and subsequent inflammatory complications [60]. Like natural teeth, implants are surrounded by a soft tissue seal that protects the underlying bone from microbial challenges. Specifically, the oral, sulcular, and junctional (or junctional-like) epithelium around implants forms a biological barrier against the external environment [33, 61]. However, unlike natural teeth—where gingival connective tissue fibers insert perpendicularly into the cementum—dental implants lack a true

connective tissue attachment [61]. Instead, circumferential collagen fibers aligned parallel to the implant surface stabilize the peri-implant soft tissue seal without, however, inserting into the implant material, thereby reducing the mechanical resilience of the seal to disruption [61].

Despite both bearing effective soft-tissue seals, the biofilm-associated inflammatory response between teeth and implants differs markedly. Specifically, implants show significantly faster tissue breakdown and a markedly faster progression into bone loss upon infection. This difference might be associated with the potential weakening of the epithelial barrier due to ulceration and edematous swelling [29, 33, 62]. Comparative analyses of soft tissue biopsies from teeth and implants revealed notable histopathological differences between peri-implantitis and periodontitis. Specifically, lesions associated with peri-implantitis compared to periodontitis are characterized by a larger inflammatory infiltrate and greater density of immune cells, that is plasma cells, macrophages and neutrophils. Peri-implant inflammatory infiltrates tend furthermore to extend more apically beyond the pocket epithelium compared to those in periodontitis and are not contained by a surrounding capsule of healthy connective tissue, arresting its progression (**Figure 3**) [29, 63].

These observed differences in the inflammatory response may be attributed to the lower vascularisation of peri-implant soft tissues. Specifically, soft tissue blood supply in peri-implant tissues is primarily derived from the periosteum of the crestal bone as opposed to natural teeth, where the richly vascularised periodontal ligament contributes to blood supply significantly [64]. Over time, bone remodeling and recession around implants can further compromise the limited blood supply, affecting the ability of peri-implant tissues to respond to inflammatory challenges further [61].

Despite advances in understanding peri-implant disease, the transition from health to peri-implantitis appears to be driven by a complex and partly self-reinforcing interplay between biofilm maturation on the implant surface and the host's inflammatory response [29]. A key event in disease progression is the shift from a symbiotic to a dysbiotic implant-associated biofilm, which has been described to be lower in quality and less diverse, with a higher accumulation of specific bacteria

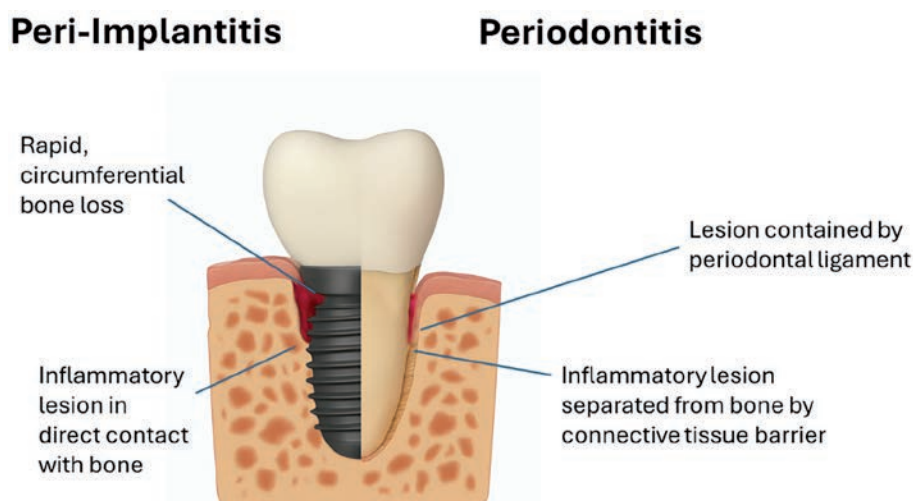


Figure 3.
Anatomical and inflammatory differences between peri-implantitis (left) and periodontitis (right).

compared to periodontal biofilms [60, 65]. This shift is promoted by changes in nutrient availability, pH alterations, oxygen depletion and the emergence of pathobionts, all fueled by sustained chronic inflammation [66]. As the disease progresses, biofilms mature and become increasingly resistant to host immune responses and chemotherapeutic agents [65]. Notably, mature biofilms are less responsive to antiseptic and antibiotic treatments as opposed to, for example planktonic bacteria and early, immature biofilm communities, which have proven well controllable through established preventive antibiotic protocols during, for example implant provision [66, 67].

1.6 Novel concepts in the understanding of dental implant integration and rejection

Recent research has highlighted the role of immunological factors in implant osseointegration, giving rise to the emerging field of osteoimmunology [68–70]. Within this framework, implant placement induces a transient, acute inflammatory response which—when involving an inert biomaterial such as titanium—may result in a favorable regenerative healing response, that is osseointegration. This process contrasts a situation in which chronic inflammation may lead to fibrous encapsulation of the biomaterial and eventual implant rejection [71].

Unlike natural teeth, dental implants trigger a controlled foreign body reaction that leads to the formation of a cortical bone capsule—commonly referred to as osseointegration. This structure reflects a state of tissue homeostasis, maintained by a balance between osteoclastic and osteoblastic activities [69]. The evolving understanding of osseointegration has been propelled, in part, by insights into macrophage behavior—specifically, their polarization from a pro-inflammatory M1 into a pro-regenerative M2 phenotype [72–74]. Conversely, M1 macrophages play a critical role in the pathogenesis of peri-implant disease by releasing pro-inflammatory cytokines such as interleukin-1 (IL-1) and tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF- α), both of which are the potent mediators of osteolysis and inflammatory tissue degradation [75].

Disruption of peri-implant tissue homeostasis—whether by plaque accumulation or other factors—can trigger an inflammatory response leading to peri-implant osteolysis and a reduced capacity for tissue repair. The onset and progression of peri-implantitis may be influenced by a combination of local, systemic and patient-related behavioral factors, rendering it a clinically complex and challenging condition to manage [29].

2. Risk factors

The susceptibility of dental implants to peri-implantitis is shaped by a range of systemic, local, and iatrogenic factors. Accurate prognostic assessment is essential for effective risk management and implementing preventive strategies throughout implant therapy.

From an academic perspective, the determinants of disease development are typically classified as either risk indicators or risk factors. Risk indicators are characteristics or exposures associated with disease presence, primarily identified through cross-sectional studies and denote correlation rather than causation. In contrast, risk factors are established through longitudinal research and imply a temporal and potentially causal relationship with disease onset.

Importantly, most studies on peri-implant disease are observational in nature and do not meet the methodological criteria required to establish the true risk factors. Nevertheless, to provide clinicians with a practical framework for evaluating patient-specific risks during implant placement and maintenance, this chapter will use the term risk factors in a broad sense—encompassing both evidence-based risk factors and strongly associated risk indicators.

In clinical practice, it is often useful to distinguish between risk factors that are intrinsic to the patient and those that are treatment-related or behaviourally driven—and therefore potentially modifiable. A more nuanced classification differentiates among patient-related systemic and local factors, iatrogenic influences, behavioral risks and implant- or site-specific conditions. It is also important to acknowledge that while some risk factors are well-established, others remain under investigation, with current evidence insufficient to confirm a definitive causal relationship (Table 3).

Patient-related systemic and local factors constitute the foundational determinants of an individual's susceptibility to peri-implantitis. These factors are often non-modifiable or only marginally amenable to change. In contrast, iatrogenic and behavioral factors represent key opportunities for risk mitigation through appropriate clinical decision-making, patient education and reinforcement of compliance—ideally initiated prior to implant placement as part of primordial prevention concepts [76]. Finally, implant- and site-specific variables, such as implant design and bone quality, must be carefully assessed for their potential influence on case-specific outcomes and long-term treatment success (Figure 4).

2.1 Patient-related risk factors

2.1.1 History of periodontitis

Both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies evidence that patients with a history of periodontitis are more susceptible to peri-implantitis [50, 52, 77–79]. Meta-analysis has indicated that a history of periodontitis exposes patients to a 2.2 to 9.2 elevated risk for peri-implantitis [29]. From an epidemiological point of view, it is important to note that the global prevalence of periodontitis, particularly its moderate to severe forms, is high and consistent across populations, with estimates showing that severe

Category	Description	Examples
Systemic	Factors related to the patient's general health influencing susceptibility to inflammation and healing.	Smoking, diabetes mellitus, genetic predisposition, osteoporosis, immunodeficiency
Local factor-related	Conditions in the oral environment affecting plaque control and tissue response.	History of periodontitis, poor oral hygiene, keratinized mucosa deficiency
Behavioral	Patient habits and compliance affecting disease control	Poor plaque control, irregular maintenance visits, smoking
Iatrogenic	Factors related to clinical procedures, surgical techniques and prosthetic design.	Residual cement, implant malposition, inadequate prosthetic emergence profile, overloading
Implant- and site-specific	Implant or anatomical site-related factors affecting peri-implant tissue health.	Implant surface characteristics, bone quality, soft tissue thickness

Table 3.
Risk factors.

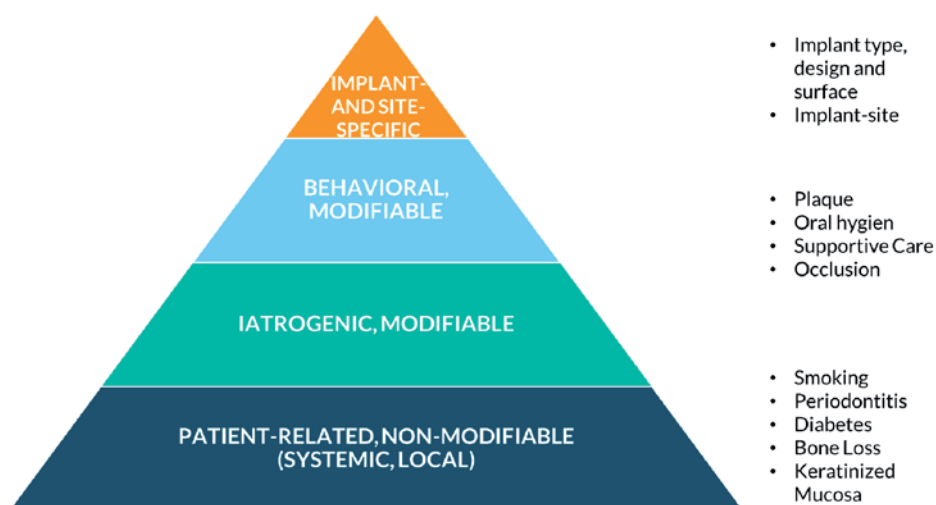


Figure 4. Hierarchical classification of peri-implantitis risk factors. The pyramid illustrates the layered influence of risk factors, from fundamental patient-related systemic and local factors at the base to implant- and site-specific factors at the top.

periodontitis affects 10–15% of adults worldwide and overall periodontitis (including mild and moderate) affects more than 50% of adults [80–82]. Clinicians planning implant therapy are therefore advised to assess patients for signs of periodontal disease and to identify the indicators of current or past disease activity, such as a history of periodontitis-related tooth loss. Identifying affected patients may necessitate adjustments to the treatment and follow-up plan, such as periodontal treatment prior to commencing implant therapy and implementing supportive periodontal care protocols [78, 83, 84]. Although some studies suggest that implant placement into previously infected periodontal sites may be feasible—provided that extraction sockets are thoroughly debrided and meticulously disinfected—there is currently limited evidence supporting the long-term prognosis of such approaches [85]. There is also currently insufficient evidence to support the notion that only severe forms of periodontitis significantly increase the risk of peri-implantitis [78].

2.1.2 Smoking

Smoking, as well as electronic cigarette use, has been reported to significantly affect implant failure rates, the risk of postoperative infection as well as marginal bone loss [81–83]. In addition, several studies have reported smoking to affect osteogenesis, angiogenesis and plaque accumulation, essential for implant integration and health [83–85]. Individual studies have evidenced that smokers may exhibit a 2.7 to 31.6 times elevated risk for peri-implantitis [29, 86–93]. Although numerous studies have demonstrated a strong association between smoking and peri-implantitis, methodological limitations—particularly the inability to control for confounding factors adequately—have so far omitted a consensus on the relation between smoking and peri-implantitis [14, 29]. Clinicians may consider this important factor during treatment provision as a modifiable patient-behavioral factor with relatively high potential importance for treatment prognosis.

2.1.3 Diabetes

With a global prevalence of 8%, type I and insulin-deficient type II (accounting for 90–95% of cases) diabetes comprises a group of metabolic disorders characterized by impaired glycemic control. Evidence supports a causal relationship between diabetes and a moderately elevated 1.9- to 3-fold risk for peri-implantitis and peri-implant bone loss [54, 94, 95]. Specifically, poor glycemic control has been reported to significantly increase the risk of peri-implantitis and implant failure [54, 95–97].

Elevated HbA1c levels exert multiple detrimental effects on peri-implant health, including impairing bone metabolism and osseointegration, compromising the quality and resilience of the peri-implant soft tissue seal and impairing neutrophil function, thereby weakening the host's ability to control biofilm-induced inflammation [98–100]. Importantly, evidence also suggests that patients with adequate glycemic control (HbA1c \leq 7%) do not exhibit an increased risk of peri-implantitis compared to non-diabetic individuals [101–104].

However, study inconsistencies remain, particularly regarding the heterogeneous use of diagnostic parameters (e.g. HbA1c levels, fasting blood glucose, or self-reported diabetes status). For example, as opposed to type 1, only type 2 diabetes has been associated with a higher incidence of peri-implant disease [105–107]. These discrepancies may explain why current consensus reports have not yet recognized diabetes as a definitive risk factor for peri-implantitis or implant loss [14, 29]. In conclusion, the detrimental effect of poorly controlled diabetes on peri-implant health is relatively well established and should be carefully considered during both the planning and maintenance phases of implant therapy.

2.1.4 Other systemic conditions

A whole series of other systemic conditions that may be associated with an elevated risk for peri-implantitis comprising, for example cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, specifically when medicated with bisphosphonates, obesity, as well as age and gender, have been researched and discussed throughout the literature [29, 108–112]. Compared to other systemic risk factors, these conditions remain insufficiently studied, and a conclusive association with peri-implantitis has yet to be established [14, 29]. However, certain conditions—such as obesity—may serve as surrogate indicators of other well-established risk factors and could, therefore, contribute to the overall assessment of a patient's risk profile for peri-implantitis. Other conditions, such as osteoporosis, have been associated with increased peri-implant bone loss and may, therefore, be considered modifying factors in the onset and progression of peri-implantitis [112]. Finally, patients may also exhibit a genetic predisposition to peri-implantitis, involving polymorphisms in genes related to immune regulation and inflammatory response—such as interleukin-1 (IL-1), interleukin-6 (IL-6), interleukin-10 (IL-10) and tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF- α) [113]. While some evidence suggests a potential role of these genetic factors in the pathogenesis of peri-implantitis, they are not yet considered clinically actionable [29].

2.1.5 Keratinized mucosa

There is growing interest in the role of keratinized mucosa (KM) in maintaining peri-implant health and ensuring a stable peri-implant soft tissue seal [61]. Clinical

studies and systematic reviews suggest that implant sites with a limited width of KM (≤ 2 mm) are more prone to plaque accumulation and present higher plaque and bleeding on probing scores, indicative of increased peri-implant mucosal inflammation [114–117]. Notably, the absence of KM has been associated with patient-reported brushing discomfort and reduced oral hygiene effectiveness, potentially contributing to plaque accumulation and inflammation [118]. Conversely, implants surrounded by an adequate band of KM appear to respond more favorably to peri-implant mucositis treatment, underlining the role of KM in supporting disease resolution [119].

A recent systematic review reported that implants lacking KM have a 2.78-fold higher risk of developing peri-implantitis than those with sufficient KM [120]. However, it should be noted that much of the current evidence stems from observational studies with inherent limitations, and a direct causal relationship remains under debate. Nonetheless, these findings underscore the importance of ensuring an adequate peri-implant soft tissue phenotype—including both KM width and mucosal thickness—as part of comprehensive strategies to promote long-term peri-implant health.

2.2 Iatrogenic and behavioral factors

2.2.1 Plaque control, oral hygiene and professional supportive peri-implant care

Given the plaque-associated nature of peri-implant disease, poor plaque control remains one of the most significant risk factors and predictors for peri-implantitis, with studies reporting a 3- to 14-fold increased risk in patients with inadequate plaque control [54, 57, 121–124]. While plaque scores indicate an elevated microbial burden, the progression to peri-implantitis depends on the host's inflammatory response, highlighting the importance of clinical indicators such as bleeding on probing to assess the individual susceptibility [125]. Plaque accumulation is closely linked to oral hygiene practices but also to factors affecting accessibility for self-care and the provision of regular professional maintenance therapy. Clinical studies have demonstrated that peri-implantitis occurs more frequently at sites with limited accessibility for cleaning compared to well-accessible areas, underscoring the importance of accessibility in prosthetic planning and design [126, 127].

Furthermore, supportive peri-implant care (SPIC) has been shown to significantly reduce peri-implantitis incidence from 44 to 18% over 5 years and the necessity for associated treatment intervention from 41 to 27% over a ten-year period [78, 128]. Importantly, patients adhering to regular SPIC exhibited a sevenfold lower risk of developing peri-implantitis compared to non-compliant individuals, underscoring the dual benefit of professional biofilm removal and early diagnosis of biological complications during recall visits [129]. Likewise, early marginal bone loss around implants has been identified as a significant risk indicator for peri-implantitis development, making its early detection during maintenance visits crucial for preventive intervention [50, 78]. Although not exclusively related to iatrogenic factors or patient behavior, effective plaque control remains crucial for reducing the risk of peri-implantitis. This requires attention from a restorative design, patient education and compliance and clinician awareness standpoint [130].

2.2.2 Occlusal overload

Clinical studies indicate a potential correlation between clinical signs of occlusal overload and an increased incidence of peri-implantitis [123, 131]. Furthermore,

occlusal overload has also been reported to potentially cause peri-implant bone loss increasing the susceptibility for peri-implantitis [132]. Likewise, bruxism, although not directly related to peri-implantitis, has been correlated to a significantly higher risk of failure [133, 134].

Systematic reviews remain inconclusive regarding a direct causal relationship between occlusal overload and peri-implantitis, as occlusal overload alone does not appear to induce peri-implantitis but, conversely, may accelerate bone loss in the presence of plaque-induced inflammation [135]. As a result, occlusal overload is potentially best considered a modifying rather than a causative factor in peri-implant tissue breakdown. In the context of primary prevention, clinicians are advised to routinely assess and manage potential malocclusion in implant patients, particularly in those displaying elevated risk profiles.

2.3 Implant- and site-specific factors

Implant- and site-specific factors refer to anatomical, surgical and implant-design-related aspects that may influence a patient's susceptibility to peri-implantitis or modulate the disease's progression. These factors typically indirectly affect plaque accumulation, soft tissue resilience or access for maintenance. Certain aspects—such as implant positioning or the emergence profile—originate from clinical decisions and may, therefore, be considered iatrogenic. Nevertheless, once established, these factors define the long-term anatomical and biomechanical environment in which peri-implant disease may develop or progress.

Material- and design-related aspects of implant-borne restorations vary widely and include factors such as implant type, surface characteristics, the implant–prosthetic connection type, and the contour and type of the prosthetic restoration, all potentially having a direct causal or potentially modifying effect on the risk of peri-implantitis (**Figures 5 and 6**).

The implant–abutment microgap has long been discussed as a potential reservoir for bacterial colonization and a potentially contributing factor to peri-implant inflammation and marginal bone loss (**Figure 7**) [136].

Tissue-level implants and platform-switching concepts relocate the microgap away from the marginal bone, thereby reducing or eliminating its direct impact on peri-implant tissues [137–141]. Both designs have been demonstrated to reduce crestal bone loss compared to platform-matched variants significantly [142, 143].



Figure 5. Iatrogenic peri-implantitis sites 24 and 25 resulting from inadequate inter-implant distances and prosthetic design (on the left clinical image, on the right intraoral radiograph).

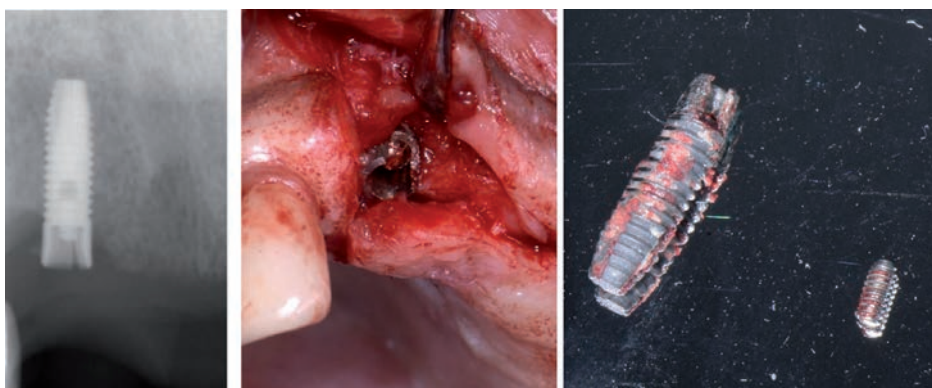


Figure 6. Peri-implantitis following implant fracture resulting from insufficient implant diameter as a bridge abutment.

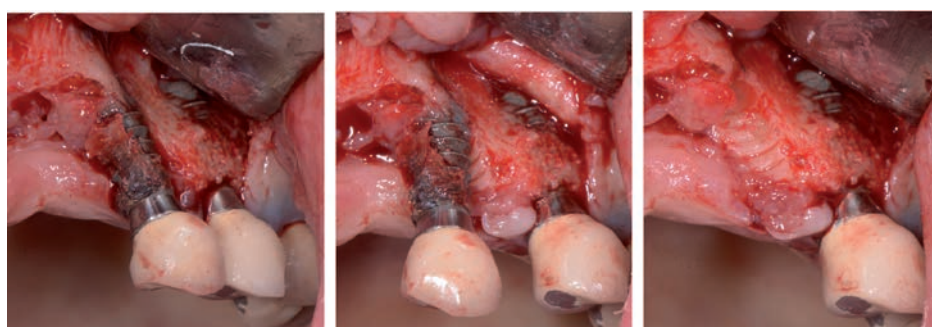


Figure 7. Severe peri-implantitis: site 24, risk factor is poor fit between abutment and crown; site 25, presence of fenestration. Implant 24 failed: explantation.

Observational studies have further indicated that tissue-level implants may be less prone to peri-implantitis [29, 44, 142]. Nevertheless, the influence of implant or implant abutment connection types on peri-implantitis, irrespective of subcrestal or crestal placement modalities, remains inconclusive [144–147]. Irrespective of the current level of evidence, the biological plausibility of certain implant designs—such as tissue-level implants—in promoting peri-implant tissue stability remains strong. This may justify their preferential use in patients at elevated risk for peri-implant disease despite the lack of conclusive supporting data.

The retention mechanism, that is cement as opposed to screw retention, as a potential risk factor for peri-implantitis, has also recently gained increasing attention [148, 149]. Literature indicates a direct causal association of peri-implantitis with subgingival excess cement resulting from incomplete removal during cementation [150–154]. Contrarily, literature also appears to suggest that both cement and screw-retained restorations may yield comparable alveolar bone stability and implant loss in the absence of excess cement [146, 155]. Clinicians should carefully consider the type and specific design of the retention mechanism depending on various factors, comprising the extension, type, location of the cementation margin and any requirements for potential future maintenance and removal [152].

Lastly, the type of prosthesis and its contouring are critical determinants of oral hygiene accessibility and plaque retention, thereby influencing the risk of developing

peri-implantitis. Full-arch restorations, for example, have been associated with a 16.1-fold increased risk of peri-implantitis compared to single crowns, possibly due to, for example, reduced inter-implant spacing compromising cleanability [131, 156]. Prosthetic designs that promote plaque accumulation and limit access for hygiene with convex emergence profiles and bulky contours in splinted restorations have been shown to elevate the risk of peri-implant disease significantly [126, 157, 158]. In some cases, over-contoured or bulky restorations may result from suboptimal implant positioning, thus representing iatrogenic factors [29, 130]. Clinicians are therefore encouraged to implement appropriate measures in anatomically or prosthetically challenging cases to prevent the delivery of restorations that may increase the risk for future biological complications.

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