An assessment of record-keeping in maxillary canine eruption

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The maxillary canine is a commonly impacted tooth which can lead to serious sequelae if untreated. The general dental practitioner's role is to monitor their eruption and investigate as required. Failure to do so can lead to significant problems including cyst formation and resorption of adjacent teeth, as well as the threat of litigation. It is therefore essential that practitioners are recording their canine eruption assessment. A retrospective audit was designed, with one hundred records of 12-year-old patients selected and assessed for the previous three years. The results showed that there were 28 patients with either one or both upper canines unerupted at their last appointment (20 male, 8 female). Of these 28 patients with an unerupted canine, only 5 patients had a record that the presence of their canine had been assessed. This audit highlighted the need for improvement in record keeping during pediatric dental examinations, and in response to the audit results a quality improvement plan was implemented. This comprised of a guidance document which mentioned common orthodontic problems in children and the appropriate ages to consider referral, which was placed in all dental surgeries.

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