

Mini-implants in Orthodontics

Innovative Anchorage Concepts

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Quintessence Publishing Co Ltd
London, Berlin, Chicago, London, Tokyo, Barcelona, Beijing, Istanbul, Milan,
Moscow, New Delhi, Paris, Prague, Sao Paulo, Seoul and Warsaw



Foreword

In orthodontics, a theoretical basis commonly is little more than an imaginative, after-the-fact rationalization. A century ago, orthodontists who used jackscrews argued that intermittent forces are “more physiologic”. Competing orthodontists who used springs, elastics, grass line, etc. argued that continuous forces are better. Traditionally, the appliance comes first; the biological justification, if any, comes later and only in sufficient doses to “sell” the appliance. In contemporary orthodontics, a classic example would be the claims that a clever piece of plastic or a given bracket–archwire combination can speak the language of the osteoclast and osteoblast and thereby permit treatment effects that the literature argues are impossible. Implants are something of an anomaly: theory preceded and spurred the development of the appliance. The fact that bone cannot grow interstitially, combined with the success of implants in restorative dentistry, implied that implants ought to be able to enhance anchorage. In other words, there was sufficient theoretical basis to warrant investigation. Given that the history of orthodontics is strewn with the wreckage of popular but ultimately flawed “philosophies” and treatments, sound biological theory is not the enemy, but rather a veritable sixth sense, designed to protect both patient and provider. With respect to temporary anchorage devices, theory implies not only that they are worth investigating, but also that, if successful, they will revolutionize patient care and return “diagnosis and treatment planning” to its rightful position in clinical practice. Therein lies the rub. An ability to put teeth where they need to be put, rather than where the appliance du jour tends to leave them, imposes a considerable obligation on the clinician. For a given patient, where should the teeth be placed? This question is the essence of “evidence-based treatment”. The fabrication of an answer will be intellectually stimulating and, it is hoped, clinically significant. The process may well presage an orthodontic “golden age” that has nothing to do with money.

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
	<i>Björn Ludwig, Thomas Lietz, S. Jay Bowman, Sebastian Baumgaertel</i>	
1.1	References	4
2	The Problem of Anchorage	5
	<i>Peter Schopf, Björn Ludwig, S. Jay Bowman</i>	
2.1	Tooth Movement and Anchorage	5
2.2	Types of Anchorage	6
2.3	References	10
3	Mini-screws – Aspects of Assessment and Selection Among Different Systems	11
	<i>Thomas Lietz. Edited by Sebastian Baumgaertel and S. Jay Bowman</i>	
3.1	Introduction	11
3.2	General Aspects of Mini-screws	12
3.3	Screw Design	14
3.3.1	The Screw Program	14
3.3.1.1	Materials	15
3.3.1.2	Size and Number of Mini-screws	19
3.3.2	The Screw Head	23
3.3.3	The Transgingival Collar	26
3.3.4	Shank and Thread	30
3.4	Accessories in the Delivery Program	35
3.4.1	Aids to Find and Mark the Insertion Position	35
3.4.2	Instruments for Soft Tissue Perforation	37
3.4.3	Pilot Drill	37
3.4.4	Instruments for Insertion	39

3.5	Aspects Dependent on the System of Application of Mini-screws	44
3.5.1	Delivery of the Screw	44
3.5.2	Insertion of the Screw	47
3.5.3	Interconnection with Orthodontic Devices	49
3.5.4	Screw Removal	52
3.5.5	Rate of Success for Screws	52
3.5.6	Publications on the Description of Screws and Systems	53
3.6	Information from Manufacturers	54
3.7	Summary	55
3.8	References	58
3.9	Appendices	64
4	Insertion of Mini-screws	73
	<i>Björn Ludwig, Bettina Glasl, Constantin Landes, Thomas Lietz, S. Jay Bowman</i>	
4.1	Preparation for Insertion of Mini-screws	73
4.1.1	Pre-surgical Planning	73
4.1.2	Model Analysis and Clinical Treatment Planning	75
4.1.3	X-ray Analysis	76
4.2	Procedure of Insertion of the Mini-screw/Pin	78
4.2.1	Self-cutting or Self-drilling?	78
4.2.2	Choice of an Appropriate Mini-screw	79
4.2.3	Instruments and Insertion Preparation	80
4.2.4	Insertion of the Mini-screws/Pins Step-by-Step	82
4.2.4.1	<i>Anesthesia</i>	82
4.2.4.2	<i>Measurement of the Gingival Thickness</i>	83
4.2.4.3	<i>Tissue Punch</i>	83
4.2.4.4	<i>Bone Indentation and Pilot Drill</i>	84
4.2.4.5	<i>Manual Insertion of Mini-screws/Pins</i>	85
4.2.4.6	<i>Inserting Mini-screws with a Dental Handpiece</i>	87
4.3	Post-operative Phase	87
4.3.1	Healing Phase	87
4.3.2	Explantation of Mini-screws	88
4.4	References	89

5	Fields of Application of Mini-Implants	91
	<i>Benedict Wilmes. Edited by S. Jay Bowman, Sebastian Baumgaertel</i>	
5.1	Direct versus Indirect Anchorage	91
5.1.1	Direct anchorage	91
5.1.2	Indirect Anchorage	93
5.2	Clinical Solutions for Different Indications	95
5.2.1	Anterior Teeth	96
5.2.1.1	<i>Anchorage of Anterior Teeth</i>	96
5.2.1.2	<i>Intrusion/Extrusion of Anterior Teeth</i>	97
5.2.1.3	<i>Retraction of Anterior Teeth</i>	101
5.2.2	Canines	102
5.2.2.1	<i>Canine Retraction</i>	102
5.2.2.2	<i>Integration of Displaced Canines</i>	104
5.2.3	Posterior Teeth	105
5.2.3.1	<i>Anchorage of Posterior Teeth</i>	105
5.2.3.2	<i>Intrusion of Posterior Teeth</i>	108
5.2.3.3	<i>Uprighting of Tipped Molars</i>	110
5.2.3.4	<i>Mesialization of Posterior Teeth</i>	111
5.2.3.5	<i>Distalization of Posterior Teeth</i>	113
5.2.4	Dental Arch Coordination	119
5.2.4.1	<i>Palatal Expansion and Rapid Palatal Expansion (RPE)</i>	119
5.2.4.2	<i>Transverse Dental Movements</i>	121
5.2.4.3	<i>Corrections in the Sagittal Plane and Vertical Dimension</i>	121
5.3	Conclusion	122
5.4	References	122
6	Risks and Prevention Strategies	123
	<i>Bettina Glasl, Björn Ludwig, Thomas Lietz, S. Jay Bowman, Sebastian Baumgaertel</i>	
6.1	Technical and Physical Criteria	123
6.2	The Patient	124
6.2.1	Anamnestic Criteria	124
6.2.2	Morphological Criteria	127
6.3	Iatrogenic Risk Potential	128
6.3.1	Pre-surgical Factors	128
6.3.2	Intra-surgical Factors	128
6.3.3	Post-surgical Factors	131
6.4	Application-related Factors	132
6.5	System-related Factors	133
6.6	References	136

7	Integration into Clinical Practice	139
	<i>Bernhard Böhm, S. Jay Bowman, Sebastian Baumgaertel</i>	
7.1	Conditions	139
7.2	Practice Setting for the Insertion of Mini-screws	140
7.2.1	Devices and Instrumental Equipment	140
7.2.2	Hygiene Requirements and Legal Basis	140
7.2.3	Hygiene Conditions with Mini-screws	142
7.3	Documentation of the Procedure	143
7.4	Patient and Mini-screws	143
7.5	Patient Education and Approval	144
7.6	References	145
7.7	Consent Form	146
8	Outlook: The Shape of Things to Come	149
	<i>S. Jay Bowman, Bettina Glasl, Björn Ludwig, Thomas Lietz, Lysle E. Johnston, Jr.</i>	
8.1	A Spike in the Ice: a Real Paradigm Shift	149
8.1.1	An Orthodontic Tug of War	149
8.1.2	Primer, Preparation, and Performance	150
8.1.3	Doing the Due Diligence	150
8.1.4	Multitudes of Systems: The Paradox of Choice	151
8.1.5	Education and Informed Consent	151
8.1.5.1	<i>Consulting with the Patient</i>	151
8.1.5.2	<i>Informed Consent</i>	152
8.1.5.3	<i>Adolescents: Special Considerations</i>	152
8.2	Innovations on the Horizon – The Future is Now	154
8.2.1	The Changing Face of Orthodontics: Altering the Extraction Decision with Mini-screws	154
8.2.2	Full Face Orthodontics?	154
8.2.3	Maximum Retraction	155
8.2.4	Avoiding Retraction: Maintain Incisor/Lip Position	155
8.2.5	Extractions: Which Teeth?	155
8.2.6	Another Alternative for Borderline Extraction Patients?	156
8.2.7	Conservative Resolution of Crowding: Leeway Space	156
8.3	The Role of Mini-screws in Class IIs	157
8.3.1	Class II: Maxillary en Masse Retraction	159
8.3.2	Class II: Molar Distalization	160
8.3.2.1	<i>Anchorage Loss</i>	161
8.3.2.2	<i>Mini-screw-supported Distalization</i>	161
8.3.2.3	<i>Mini-screw-supported Distal Jet</i>	163
8.3.2.4	<i>A Better Alternative</i>	165

8.3.3	Intermaxillary Approaches to Class II Corrections	167
8.3.3.1	Mini-screw-supported Intermaxillary Elastics	167
8.3.3.2	Addressing the Mandible for Class II Correction	167
8.3.3.3	Future Investigations	169
8.4	The Role of Mini-Screws in Class IIIs	169
8.4.1	Class III: Maxillary en Masse Protraction	169
8.4.2	Class III: Mandibular en Masse Retraction	169
8.4.3	Mini-screw Adjuncts to Surgery	169
8.5	Transverse Discrepancies	169
8.6	Single Tooth Issues	173
8.6.1	Uprighting Teeth	174
8.6.2	Individual Labial Root Torque	174
8.6.3	Individual Temporary Tooth Replacement	176
8.7	Mini-screw Auxiliaries	176
8.7.1	Bite Openers	177
8.7.2	Bite Closers	178
8.7.3	Propeller Arms	178
8.7.4	Pushmi-Pullyu Mechanics	180
8.8	Final Considerations	180
8.9	References	181
9	Index	185

Fields of Application of Mini-Implants

In this chapter, various possibilities for clinical mini-implant applications are demonstrated. Due to the large variety of insertion sites for mini-implants, there is a bigger spectrum of indications than for the other skeletal anchorage options.

Before the different treatment options with mini-implant anchorage can be discussed, an explanation of how to couple the mini-implant to the orthodontic appliance (direct versus indirect anchorage) is required. As such, the mechanics of mini-implant anchorage should be an integral part of the orthodontic treatment planning process.

5.1 Direct versus Indirect Anchorage

In general, two different types of anchorage must be distinguished: direct and indirect. Determining the type of anchorage that is more favorable depends on the following clinical or radiological factors: local bone quality, available space (in particular for interradicular insertion) and mucosal thickness. Furthermore, the expected load on the mini-implant should be taken into consideration.

5.1.1 Direct anchorage

In a direct anchorage situation, the implant is directly connected to the dental unit(s) to be moved. In this manner, a purely mini-implant supported anchorage is the result. Depending on the treatment objective, forces can be transferred from the implant to the dental unit(s) using the following modules.

Compression Spring (Fig. 5-1)

The use of a compression spring always requires an additional arch wire or wire segment to stabilize the compression spring (open coil spring). The insertion can sometimes be difficult, and regular reactivation or a change to a new, longer spring is often required. This can often be done without removing the entire set-up by crimping a stop or using an arch lock on the arch wire or segment. It is for these reasons that tension mechanics are often preferred.

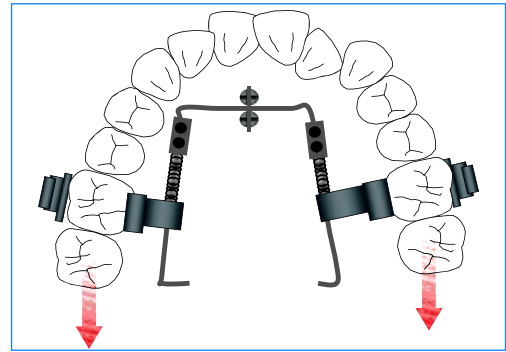
Tension Spring (Fig. 5-2)

Super-elastic nickel titanium (NiTi) springs (closed coil springs) are biomechanically more favorable than elastic chains due to their consistent and constant force delivery. Depending on the make of the tension spring and head design of the mini-implant, it may be necessary to attach the spring using a stainless steel ligature or Monkey Hook (American Orthodontics, Sheboygan, WI). Some

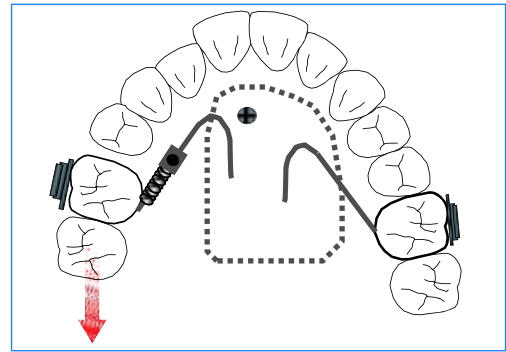


Fig. 5-1 Direct anchorage with compression spring: a compression spring is applied on a 16 x 22 NiTi segmented arch between mini-implant (inter-radicular between teeth 6 and 5) and tooth 3. This allows for distalization and de-rotation of the latter.

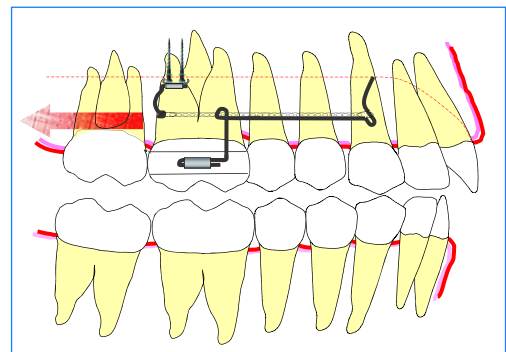
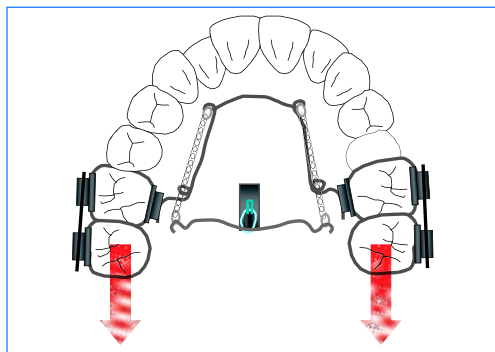
Sketch 5-58, Case 58 Maxillary molar distalization using the Keles-Slider: two mini-implants are blocked in the direction of force application to avoid anterior tipping.

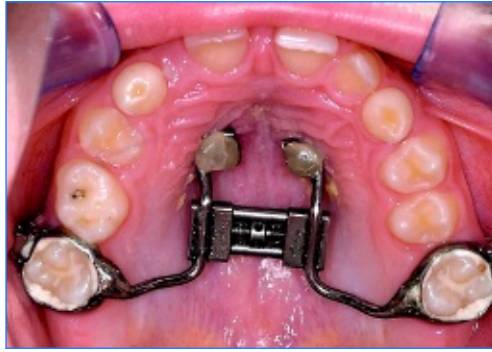


Sketch 5-59, Case 59 Distalization of the right molar with cortically anchored Nance button and Distal-Jet element (photo by Dr. B. Ludwig, Traben-Trarbach).

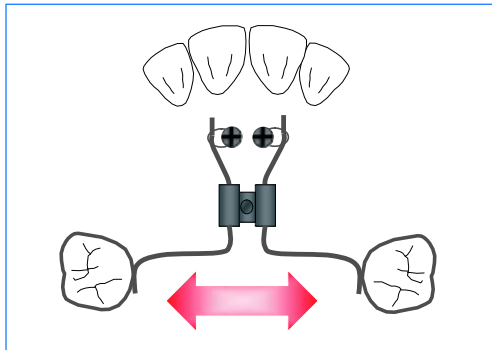


Sketch 5-60, Case 60 Maxillary molar distalization using the distal helix: two mid-palatal mini-implants are coupled in the direction of force application using half a molar band and composite to avoid tipping. A transpalatal arch is inserted in the soldered Mia-lock. Off this TPA, bilateral springs distalize molars that are connected through a Quadhelix.





Sketch 5-61, Case 61 Rapid palatal expansion using the Duesseldorf Hybrid-Hyrax: both first molars and two anterior mini-implants serve as anchorage.

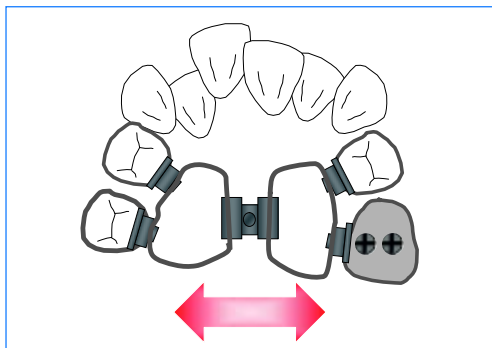


5.2.4 Dental Arch Coordination

5.2.4.1 Palatal Expansion and Rapid Palatal Expansion (RPE)

Mini-implant anchorage can also be helpful in the coordination of the maxillary and mandibular dental arches. Rapid palatal expansion (RPE) is often indicated with a maxillary transverse constriction of skeletal origin. Sometimes, however, sufficient dental anchorage cannot be established and more tipping than sutural expansion results. A frequent reason for this can be the dental age. If the required deciduous teeth are mobile, during the late phase of the mixed dentition, adequate anchorage for continuous sutural maxillary expansion is not available. This is especially true when concurrent protraction of the maxilla is planned using a facemask, as waiting for complete eruption and root formation of the premolars is not desirable. An alternative mechanism would be to use the first molars in the posterior and two mini-implants for the anterior area as an anchorage for the Hyrax expander (Dusseldorf Hybrid-Hyrax, Sketch 5-61, Case 61).

In the mutilated dentition (e.g. loss of first molars), mini-implants can be used to replace teeth as anchorage units. Since there is limited bony support in the posterior maxilla in these instances, two mini-implants should be inserted in the loading direction, next to each other, and then connected (Sketch 5-62).



Sketch 5-62 Rapid palatal expansion with reduced number of teeth: mini-implants connected with a molar band and composite in the direction of force application substitute as anchorage units for missing teeth.