





**DISCUSSION:**

The use of dental panoramic tomography (DPT) for the study of impacted teeth is limited to hospital dental patients and large dental practices because of associated costs and ethical considerations. (1) (2) A further shortcoming associated with the use of DPT for the study of impacted teeth and associated pathologies is the validity of the assessment when the radiograph is used as the only diagnostic tool.(6)(7) To ensure diagnostic validity in this study, radiographic findings were verified with clinical records, which were collected on standard forms as part of the routine examination process. In this study, clinical data were collected from the only dental teaching hospital in Saveetha Dental College, which has a policy of using DPT for all new patients. 47% of patients in this study were aged between 21 and 30 years. This may reflect increased dental awareness in this group of patients. However, the relatively high proportion of patients in their third decade may also have increased the overall prevalence of impacted teeth in this study. The pattern of impacted tooth types seen was similar to previous reports with the most common being third molars, then upper canines, and others. (8-16)

The distribution of angulation and depth of impaction in the impacted lower third molars seen in this study is similar to that noted by Kramer and Williams. (12) They reported that 75% of impacted lower third molars were in mesio-angular and horizontal angulation. The angulation of an impacted tooth against the second molar has potential clinical implications, as outlined by Yamaoka et al. (19) For mesio-angular and horizontal impacted lower third molars partially exposed in the oral cavity, their occlusal surfaces form plaque accumulative crevices against the distal surfaces of the second molars. (21-23) This may be clinically relevant to the present group, as more than 40% of impacted lower third molars were less than 5 mm deep in bone. In fact, the prevalence of periodontal disease and caries in lower second molars (8.8% and 7.4%, respectively) seen in the present study is higher than the corresponding figures of 4.5% and 3%, respectively, reported by Stanley et al. ( 17-20)

**CONCLUSION**

Most common type of angulation in impacted teeth is mesioangular impaction and is most commonly found in males according to this study. Periodontal diseases and caries of the lower second molars adjacent to impacted third molars were found in most of the cases. The prevalence of root resorption and follicular enlargement was low overall.

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