CROWN LENGTHENING FOR AESTHETIC PURPOSES FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: A CASE DISCUSSION

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Abstract
The aim of dental treatment is to restore function and improve oral health condition. It is an advantage if the treatment conducted can also improve aesthetic. However, current trend of patient’s demand for aesthetic treatment is challenging. This alarming scenario sometimes does not comply with Shariah and Islamic jurisprudence. Crown lengthening is a procedure to facilitate restoration in certain clinical conditions simultaneously improves the aesthetic in anterior region. It involves manipulation of gingiva which requires removal of soft tissue and/or hard tissue. This paper was aimed to discuss the management of missing teeth with crown lengthening surgery from Islamic perspective. In the selected case, a lady requested to replace her denture with a fixed prosthesis that requires surgery. Initially, the surgical procedure was only planned on the right anterior region. However, during the preliminary stage of determining the treatment outcome; crown lengthening on both sides is advice to harmonize the gingival line. The final decision was to carry out surgical procedure on the site of complaint and crown lengthening surgery on both sides. As expected, the outcome of the treatment significantly improved the aesthetic of the patient. This study employs mainly the comparative case study approach where the detail description of the selected case is mapped to the Shariah principles and guidelines related to aesthetic treatment. The selected Shariah principles and guidelines are based on the commonly accepted school of law. In conclusion, this study found that the treatment proposed by the specialist that is based on function first, followed by correction of aesthetics is in line with the guidelines and principles of Shariah as well as legal maxim that falls under acts are judged by their goals and purpose (al-'Umur-bimaqasidiha). Therefore, basic knowledge on Islamic principle is favourable for dentist and patient in deciding the final treatment plan.

Keywords: dental fiqh, aesthetic dentistry, crown lengthening, shariah
INTRODUCTION

The technology in dentistry has evolved rapidly and the improvement of function and aesthetic for betterment of oral health condition is inevitable. In any dental treatment, the ultimate goal is to restore the oral health function. By doing dental treatment, it is a credit for patient if the aesthetic can be improved. The procedure involves multi-discipline of dental speciality including prosthodontics and periodontics. The need to improve the function and aesthetic is vital because it affects the patient’s well-being and psycho-social.

The demand for aesthetic dental treatment is alarming for dentist especially Muslim dentist and Muslim patients. However, to meet patient’s need and expectation to look perfect is quite challenging and need careful assessment. It was recommended to have a Shariah guideline for dental practitioner in their aesthetic work (Yacob et al., 2017).

Crown lengthening surgery such as gingivectomy, gingivoplasty and apically repositioned gingiva is a resective periodontal procedure that involves reduction and reposition of the periodontal structures around the tooth in order to gain adequate sound tooth structure above the alveolar crest (Yeh & Andreana, 2004). The indication of this procedure is to maintain biological width, facilitate restorative work and ensure periodontal health. The crown lengthening is also used to reposition or altered the gingival line in aesthetic region especially on maxillary anterior teeth (Sonick, 1997). According to Pratik and Pranay (2012), the majority of dentist consider their patient are more conscious of aesthetic smile rather than their dental condition (Pratik & Pranay, 2012). In gaining an aesthetic smile, the teeth need to be well aligned and levelled, and the gingiva should have harmony contour (Seixas, Costa-Pinto & Araujo, 2012). Therefore, crown lengthening has become one of the surgery that significantly can improve patient smile and profile. Therefore, the aim of this paper was to discuss regarding crown lengthening procedure to improve aesthetic from Islamic perspective.

CASE STUDY

A 35-year-old lady was referred from private dental clinic complaining of unsatisfactory removable partial denture and would like to have fixed prosthesis. The amount of hard tissue and soft tissue loss was quite extensive, therefore general practitioner was in hesitant to provide fixed bridge for this patient and seek expert opinion and further management. On the assessment by the periodontist and prosthodontist, both have an agreement that patient need to undergo bone augmentation in order to restore the function and aesthetic of the patient.

Past dental history revealed patient had undergone extensive crown work on her anterior teeth from upper right canine (UR3) to upper left maxillary canine (UL3).
to correct her severe malocclusion. Few months later, right maxillary lateral incisor (UR2) and upper right canine (UR3) had to be extracted due to long-standing dental abscess. Instead of simple extraction patient was suffered from minor oral surgery due to fractured root during extraction and she ended up with transitional acrylic denture to replace the missing teeth.

Upon examination, patient presented with missing tooth on tooth UR2 and UR3 and the amount of alveolar bone loss was enormous which result in disharmony of the gingival line as shown in Photograph A. In addition, radiological view revealed incomplete root canal treatment and periapical radiolucencies on the anterior teeth upper right central incisor (UR1), upper left central incisor (UL1) and upper left lateral incisor (UL2). At the treatment plan stage, the patient was agreed to undergone bone augmentation with provisional bridge while waiting for bone and soft tissue healing. The specialist also gave an option to the patient to perform the crown lengthening procedure at contra lateral side. This procedure was recommended to achieve a harmonious gingival line which at the end of the treatment would give better aesthetic outcome. However, patient had been informed that this procedure was not mandatory. The aim is only to improve aesthetic since the surgical procedure is located in the anterior region. The summary of the treatment plan was as follows:

1. Bone augmentation to improve width and height of alveolar bone for the base of fixed protheses (4 unit fixed-fixed bridge
2. Root Canal Treatment on upper right central incisor (UR1), upper left central incisor (UL1) and upper left lateral incisor (UL2)
3. Redo the crowns in UL1, UL2 and upper left canine (UL3).

During bone augmentation, the crown lengthening procedure was performed on both site and a provisional bridge was placed on the surgical area while waiting for complete bone healing as part of the surgical routine (Ramli, Yacob & Ayob, 2014). The final outcome of the procedures showed in Photograph B. The issue was, is crown lengthening procedure with an intention to improve aesthetic is permissible although patient did not ask for it?

**Photograph A.** The gingival contour disharmony on the contra-lateral site.

**Photograph B.** The correction of the gingival contour with crown lengthening procedure on the contra-lateral site.
DISCUSSION

Seeking treatment

The main principle in Shariah is that a person is obliged to seek medication and treatment in the event of illness. This is evident from several legal evidences, including a hadith narrated by Usamah bin Sharik which reads:

{ثَدَأَوْا إِنَّ الَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لََْ يَضَعْ دَاءً إِلََّ وَضَعَ لَهُ شِفَاءً، أو قَالَ: دَوَاءً إِلََّ دَاءً واحِدًا قَالَوْا: يَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَمَا هُوَ؟ قَالَ: الْهَرَمِ.}

Meaning: “Take medication. Indeed Allah does not cause illness except he brings medicine; or he said: illness except for a disease (which cannot be cured) they said: O Messenger of Allah, what is that, he said: that is oldness”. (Al-Tirmidhi. Bab al-dawa wa –al hathu alaih. 1996)

In another hadith reported by al-Tirmizi that the nose of 'Arjafah bin As'ad, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, has badly wounded in the battle of al-Kulab during the jahiliyyah time. The companion replaced his wounded nose with a silver one, until the nose has rotten. The Prophet has then ordered the companion to use gold to reconstruct the nose. The text is as follows:

{أصِيبْ أَنْفِي يَوْمَ الَّذِي نَصَبَ السُّلْطَانُ بِالجَاهِلِيَّةِ، فَأَنْتَبَحَ أَنْفًا مِنْ وَرِقٍ، فَأَنْتَبَحَ أَنْفًا مِنْ ذَهَبٍ.}

Which means, "My nose has been cut off on the day of the Battle of Kulab in the days of Jahiliyyah. So I took (replaces) with silver. Then (some time) my nose began to rot. So the Prophet of Allah ordered me to replace my nose with gold." (Al-Tirmidhi. Bab Ma Ja'a Fi Syadd Al-Asnan Bi Al-Zahab. 1996)

By the virtue of this hadith, medical treatment by way of reconstructing body parts is permissible, when the part is wounded. The injury event can be considered as a necessity to legitimize the reconstructive treatment. By the virtue of this hadith also, the gold which was originally forbidden for man was used when it became necessary in event such as treatment for injury.

On the same instance, Al-Qaradhawi stated that "If there are people with a disability that causes the pain to be real or emotional, it does not matter on how to treat it. As long as the pain is eliminated and does not disturb his life. Indeed, Allah did not make this religion a bad one" (Al-Qaradawi: 1997).

Change of God’s Creation

The permissibility on the subject, however, will change to otherwise, i.e. impermissible, when the treatment is no longer intended as necessary. For example for the purpose of mere beautification. In the verse of Al-Nisa’:
Imam al-Thabari (Al-Tabari, M. Ibn Jarir. 2001) when interpreting this verse has said: The scholars differ on the interpretation of the verse فليغيرن خلق الله. Some of them say: "They will surely alter the creation of God from the animals by means of them". While some scholars say that what is meant by altering God’s creation is making tattoos. He then included a hadith narrated from Abdullah ibn Mas’ud that the Prophet Rasulullah saw said: Al-Nawawi in Sahih Muslim has narrated a Hadith, which says:

{ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْوَاشَِِاتِ وَالْمُسْتِوْشَِِاتِ، وَالنَّامِصَاتِ وَالْمُتَنَمِّصَاتِ لِلْحُسْنِ، الْمُغَيِّرَاتِ خَلْقَ اللَّه.

Which means, “Allah has cursed the women who make tattoos and the women who have this done, the women who pluck facial hair and the women who have this done, and women who widen the gap between their own or others’ teeth for the sake of beauty, changing what Allah has created.”(Muslim. Bab Tahrim Fiel Al-Wasilah Wa Al-Mustawsilah. 2006.)

Al-Nawawi in his commentary of the hadith has said: “The woman who tattoos is one who uses a needle or similar implement to prick the skin of the hand, wrist, lips or other parts of a woman’s body until she draws blood, then she puts dye into the wound. It is haram to do this or have it done by choice. Similarly, trimming or removing hair from the face is also haram, whether one does it or asks someone else to do it for one, unless a woman has a beard or moustache, in which case it is not haram to remove it.

As an example of condition related to dental perspectives (qiyas), widening the gap between the teeth is done by trimming between the incisors. This is done by old women to give the appearance of youth and make the teeth look beautiful, because this attractive gap between the teeth is characteristic of young girls. When a woman gets old, the physiological migration of teeth may result in unattractive teeth based on perceptions of the society at that time. Therefore, she may file them to make them look more attractive and give the impression that she is younger.

It is haram to do this or have it done by another, because of this hadith, and because it involves changing what Allah has created, and is a form of deception and falsehood. Widening the gap between the teeth is something that is done to make a person look beautiful, which indicates that what haram is when this is done in the pursuit of beauty, but if it were done as a form of treatment because of some problem or deformity in the teeth, then there is nothing wrong with it.” (al-Nawawi: 1392H).

Patient complaint and intention
The main complaint was uncomfortable with the removable prosthesis and patient requested for fixed prosthesis. This guided the clinician that patient’s intention (niyyat) was for her psychological comfort and not solely due to aesthetic reason.
In this regard, the uncomfortable condition of the patient is considered as state of illness, or part of thereof. The fact that that uncomfortable condition is contrary to the original healthy condition, it triggers the event of necessity. This is based on the principle of necessity “al-hajah tanzil manzilat al-darurah” which literally means need may escalate to necessity, as established in Shariah legal maxims. Hence, the principle of seeking medication on the event of illness, as based on the narration of Usamah bin Sharik and the case of 'Arjafah bin As'ad is applied.

Psychological discomfort
The retention of her RPD was good. The tooth arrangement and aesthetic of the present denture was also good. However, patient still experiences discomfort for having denture during eating. This can be considered quite normal psychological discomfort in a young patient that wear removable denture. This behaviour was also supported by Zlataric & Celebic (2008), which stated that the acceptance towards denture in young adult is somewhat limited due to aesthetic & disrupt quality of life. Therefore, she requested for other option to overcome the problem. On the other hand, patient work as a manager and she claimed that wearing denture has impaired her social life.

In dental practice, providing prosthesis to improve discomfort is a patient need. McGrath & Bedi (2001), stated tooth loss was an important predictor of quality of life. By using removable denture, it had significantly reduced her quality of life even though her tooth loss was minimal. It is also in line with qawaid fiqhiyyah as the treatment need for the well being of the patient.

Crown lengthening to improve aesthetic.
During the assessment, a diagnostic wax-up was performed to mimic the future 4 units bridge. Since patient does not have sufficient bone height and width, the final bridge would have long pontic to harmonise with the long abutment on the right central incisors (UR1). On the contra-lateral area, patient did not complaint on the aesthetic. However, a specialist suggested to perform the crown lengthening procedure due to two reasons. Firstly, to provide the best treatment outcome by harmonizing the gingival line. Secondly, since the patient was planned to undergone surgery, so it was best up to the specialist opinion to perform in one sitting procedure. Taking into consideration the specialist experience, patient might in future come and request to harmonize the gingival line. By doing this procedure in advance, it can save time, material costs and patients do not have to go through the healing phase repeatedly.

CONCLUSION
To summarize the exposition of Shariah on reconstructive surgery that is done to a patient, based on previous legal evidence, the followings can be noted:
1. If the element of necessity existed, Shariah does not prohibit a reconstructive surgery. This necessity should conform to Shariah principles such as to eliminate pain, to restore the original condition of the body part due to accident, or to improve the health condition of a patient.

2. If the surgery is for mere beautification process to the patient, and it does not give any impact to the patient in terms of health and life, then the element of necessity is considered as not existed, hence it does not justify the legality of the surgery.

3. The way that the surgery is conducted must also comply with the Shariah principles, from the materials that is used to the gender of the doctor who conducts the operation, especially when sensitive parts are involved.

REFERENCES

Al-Quran.


**Photograph**


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