



Stefan Abela

Nikki Attack and Christian Day

The Unusual Loss of Upper Lateral Incisor Teeth

Abstract: These case reports describe the unusual situation of the resorption of maxillary lateral incisors during the eruption of buccally positioned canine teeth.

Clinical Relevance: This case highlights the need for continuous monitoring of unerupted canines, and illustrates that 'normally' erupting canines can also lead to root resorption of lateral incisors.

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The association between ectopic, palatal positioned, maxillary canine teeth and resorption of incisor roots is well documented.^{1–6} Indeed, owing to the risk of ectopic development and its sequelae, monitoring the eruption of a patient's secondary canines is a key objective for any dental practitioner.

Occasionally, a clinician is presented with an unusual situation where the opposite of what we expect is seen, and what seems to be 'normal' eruption might, in fact, be associated with unforeseen pathology. This article describes two such cases, where buccally positioned canine teeth caused significant root resorption of their adjacent lateral incisors.

Case history 1

A 12-year-old Caucasian female was referred by her general dental practitioner with concerns relating to the mobility and altered colour of her upper lateral incisor teeth. She had a clear medical history and is a regular dental attendee.

Clinical examination revealed a Class I malocclusion on a skeletal Class 1 base. The patient was in the late mixed dentition, with mild crowding in the lower arch and severe crowding in the upper arch.



Figure 1. (a-d) Intra-oral clinical photographs taken on initial presentation.

The buccal segment relationships were Class I on the left and ½ unit Class II on the right.

Within the upper arch, UR3 and UL3 were partially erupted buccal to the dental arch, with mesio-buccal rotations.

The upper lateral incisors had a pinkish hue within their crowns, which is known to be synonymous with internal and external root resorption (Figure 1). Careful examination of the lateral incisors with a periodontal probe revealed subgingival buccal cavities.