

**Mini Review**

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Clear Aligner Therapy in Contemporary Orthodontics: Benefits, Challenges, and Emerging Perspectives

Majid Salas**DIU DCMF (Orth), DU Implants, BDS Certified Specialist in Orthodontics, UK*

***Corresponding author:** Majid Salas, DIU DCMF (Orth), DU Implants, BDS Certified Specialist in Orthodontics, UK.

Received Date: September 03, 2025**Published Date: September 15, 2025****Abstract**

Clear aligner therapy (CAT) has become a mainstream orthodontic option, largely due to its esthetic appeal and patient-centered advantages. This mini review summarizes current evidence on clinical effectiveness, practical limitations, and future trends in aligner therapy. While aligners demonstrate good outcomes in selected cases, their role in managing complex malocclusions remains limited, underscoring the importance of careful case selection and continued research.

Introduction

Fixed appliances have traditionally been regarded as the gold standard in orthodontics. Over the past two decades, however, the introduction of clear aligner therapy has reshaped treatment planning and patient expectations. Aligner systems promise improved comfort and esthetics, but questions remain regarding their efficiency in achieving certain tooth movements. This review highlights recent findings and explores the evolving role of aligners in orthodontic practice.

Clinical Effectiveness

Evidence suggests that aligners perform well in correcting anterior crowding, spacing, and minor transverse discrepancies. Controlled tipping and limited rotations are usually predictable, especially when auxiliaries such as attachments and elastics are employed. However, movements requiring significant torque

control, vertical extrusion, or bodily translation are less reliable with aligners compared to conventional fixed appliances (Rossini, et al. (2015) [1]; Robertson, et al. (2020) [2]). Some clinicians therefore adopt hybrid approaches, combining aligners with sectional fixed appliances for complex cases.

Advantages of Aligner Therapy

- **Esthetic appeal:** Aligners are nearly invisible, meeting increasing patient demand for discreet treatment.
- **Oral health benefits:** Their removability facilitates effective brushing and flossing, reducing risk of decalcification and gingival inflammation.
- **Patient comfort and lifestyle:** Reduced mucosal irritation and dietary flexibility often improve treatment acceptance.

- Chairside efficiency: Digital planning and fewer emergency visits may streamline clinical workflow.

Limitations and Challenges

Despite these advantages, several concerns remain:

- Patient compliance is critical; aligners must be worn 20-22 hours daily to ensure predictable results.
- Biomechanical limitations reduce efficiency in complex malocclusions, particularly in severe rotations or vertical control (Kravitz, et al. (2009) [3]; Robertson, et al. (2021) [4]).
- Treatment cost is typically higher, reflecting laboratory fees and proprietary software.
- Evidence gaps: While short- to mid-term outcomes are encouraging, long-term stability data remain limited (Ke, et al. (2019 [5]); Papadimitriou, et al. (2018) [6]).

Future Directions

Advances in materials science and digital technology are expected to improve aligner performance. AI-driven treatment simulations may enhance predictability, while in-office 3D printing could reduce costs and improve customization. Research into new thermoplastic polymers is also underway, aiming to deliver more consistent force systems. These innovations may expand the indications for aligner therapy in the near future [7, 8].

Conclusion

Clear aligner therapy has firmly established itself as a valuable tool in orthodontics. It offers significant esthetic and hygienic benefits, yet its effectiveness is most consistent in mild to moderate malocclusions. Clinicians must remain cautious in case selection

and manage patient expectations accordingly. Ongoing research into biomechanics and material innovation will determine how far aligners can extend beyond their current limitations.

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Conflict of Interest

No Conflict of Interest.

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