



Ipsos MORI

British Lingual
Orthodontic Society

Research reveals positive attitude to braces but low awareness of the invisible lingual option

New research from Ipsos MORI indicates that 18 per cent of the population of England and Wales believe their teeth would benefit from straightening with braces. Meanwhile, anecdotal evidence from orthodontists shows that people are prepared to make financial sacrifices to have treatment and see it as a valuable investment.

The survey of 877 people in England and Wales, aged 15 and over, was commissioned by the British Lingual Orthodontic Society (BLOS) to assess awareness, attitudes and experience of orthodontics with a focus on braces fitted behind the teeth. The most important finding for BLOS is that **72 per cent of people are unaware of invisible lingual braces.**

Lingual treatment is suited to people who do not want their braces to be visible or who want treatment to be discreet. Current patients are from all walks of life whether teachers, police officers, business people, actors or models. Kelly Brook is one of a number of celebrities known to have had lingual treatment.

Other attitudes revealed by the survey:

- People living in the South East are more likely to believe they need braces. Of those living in the South East of England, 30 per cent felt their teeth would benefit from orthodontics compared to seven per cent of those living in the South West.
- Gender does not greatly affect outlook among those who felt their teeth would benefit from treatment: 18 per cent of men responded positively compared to 19 per cent of women.
- Asked whether they would consider giving orthodontics as a present to a friend or a loved one, six per cent of those interviewed said they definitely would, equating to 3.1million people in England and Wales.
- In the 70+ age category, six per cent said their teeth would benefit from straightening but generally, those in the younger age categories, 44 and below, are more likely to believe in the benefits of orthodontics than those who are aged 45 and above. For instance, 25 per cent* of those in the 15-17 age group said they would definitely benefit from teeth straightening compared to 5 per cent in the 45-54 age group.

- When it comes to awareness of lingual braces, however, this is slightly higher among people in the 45-54 age group with 25 per cent being aware of lingual systems.

* low base size

Rob Slater, Chairman of BLOS, welcomed the positive attitude to orthodontic braces among the British. He commented: “The fact that so many young people today have conventional braces thanks to the National Health Service might explain the lack of awareness of invisible lingual braces.”

“Another factor is that in the past, the UK has been influenced by American trends. Lingual braces are not so widely adopted in the USA where people tend to be happy to talk about the work they are having done. In countries like Italy and France, lingual braces are more popular, since Europeans appreciate the discretion of invisible braces.”

He added: “Already we are finding that a fair proportion of teenagers would rather, where possible, pay privately to have lingual braces because it makes them feel less self-conscious, joining forces with those in their 30s and 40s who, for professional reasons, prefer not to have visible braces.”

Case study:

Kate, a teacher in a secondary school, wanted her teeth to be straighter but did not want to be seen in braces says,

“I think if I had a different job and was not working with teenagers, I might have gone down the regular route but for me it had to be something invisible. I am constantly talking and I would feel uncomfortable.”

She searched on the internet and found that the orthodontist recommended by her dentist offers invisible lingual braces. “I am getting married at the end of the year and that was the inspiration I needed to do something about it. It’s gone great for me and my teeth moved unbelievably quickly.”

There was a difficult few days at the outset, she said, when talking and eating were difficult - but she got used to it “almost over night”.

Would she recommend the lingual route? “For me it was the utmost importance for the braces not to be seen. The cost is greater and has to be taken into consideration but it’s been great and I would certainly recommend it.” (Name changed)

Notes to editors

Interviews were conducted amongst a national representative sample of adults in England and Wales aged 15+ in-home, between 13th and 19th November 2009, using the Ipsos MORI’s face to face Omnibus.

For more information, contact Caroline Holland on 020 8679 9595/07974 731396 or Emma Pelling on 0207 624 7533/07958558172 or visit www.blos.co.uk