

# New Generation Presurgical Orthopedics: A Letter to the Cleft Community

FACE

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Martha L. Mejia<sup>1</sup> and Jordan P. Steinberg<sup>1</sup>

Dear Dr. Van Aalst,

We hereby submit this Letter to the Editor to inform the readership of *FACE*, as well as the larger cleft community, of an important development over this past year. Despite our group having detailed a novel infant cleft orthopedic molding system which decouples nasoseptal alignment from alveolar approximation (termed the Rhinoplastic Appliance System, or RAS<sup>1</sup>), our esteemed colleagues from New York University (NYU) continue to advertise and market a nearly identical concept under a distinct name, with claims of originality. We have now seen marketing of the latter device penetrate into nearly every scientific meeting and symposium on infant cleft orthopedics or infant cleft care. Our system was developed over the past several decades by Martha L. Mejia, DDS, working initially in conjunction with the late Dr. S. Anthony Wolfe, at Miami Children's Hospital (currently Nicklaus Children's Hospital). The methodology has also been adopted in Latin America, with promising preliminary outcomes as recently described.<sup>2</sup> Our initial technique article on the RAS was published in *FACE* in 2023<sup>1</sup> and predated the technique description from our colleagues published in June, 2024 on the NoseAlign device in the *Journal of Craniofacial Surgery*.<sup>3</sup> We believe the NoseAlign device, or Presurgical Lip, Alveolus, and Nose Approximation (PLANA) technique, bears remarkable similarity to Dr. Mejia's already patented methodology (U.S. patent 11,166,835 B2, dated November 9, 2021). Our system was designed to facilitate more uniform adoption of presurgical orthopedic molding techniques across the world in a reproducible fashion, rather than with large-scale commercial interests in mind. While we greatly admire the work of our colleagues at NYU and are pleased to see their recognition of the benefits of independent nasal molding in infant cleft orthopedics, we hope that the larger cleft care

community will appreciate the attendant history and acknowledge our work accordingly.

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## ORCID iDs

Martha L. Mejia <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9810-5702>

Jordan P. Steinberg <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7930-3394>

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<sup>1</sup>Nicklaus Children's Hospital, Miami, FL, USA

## Corresponding Author:

Jordan P. Steinberg, Craniofacial Program, Nicklaus Children's Hospital, 3100 SW 62 Avenue, Suite 2230, Miami, FL 33155, USA.

Email: [jordan.steinberg@nicklaushealth.org](mailto:jordan.steinberg@nicklaushealth.org)