

New Trends in Dentistry

Technology is revolutionizing the world and dentistry is not immune to it. Many changes are taking place and dentists face difficult decisions so they are not left behind. They have to determine if they should replace successful and well-proven procedures of the past with new concepts being introduced.

This article will discuss some of the new trends and findings in the profession that are expected to be permanent and which will affect people

in the near future.

Connecting Gum Disease to Your General Health:

Numerous studies and articles have confirmed the connection between the health of our gums and our general health. Gum and bone diseases have been linked to various serious systemic disease conditions and organs such as the heart, lungs, pancreas, etc. Any chronic inflammation in the mouth can affect the immune system and the state of one's health.

Digital Radiography (X-Rays):

Many dentists have already converted to digital x-rays. It has many advantages such as immediacy of image observation, ability to enhance images for better diagnosis purposes, ability to transmit images electronically through email and a reduction of radiation to patients. Disadvantages are the accuracy to diagnose cavities, and the size of the digital sensors makes it more difficult to take good x-rays.

Minimal Invasive Dentistry:

In reaction to the excessive "over-treatment" observed in dental publications and the practice of extreme makeovers, a new organization, the World Congress of Minimal Invasive Dentistry, is achieving success in developing a new concept that many dental schools have embraced. This concept encourages preservation of the tooth structure with minimal cavity preparations, conservative periodontal therapy and all forms of preventive therapy.

Root Canal or Dental Implant:

Today when a tooth is in need of a root canal, there is a choice. The dentist must carefully examine the long term restorability of the tooth and advise the patient on whether to have a root canal and a crown or extract the tooth and place a dental implant.

Plastic Orthodontics:

Invisalign (Align technology) has revolutionized adult orthodontics by allowing tooth movement with clear plastic trays without compromising aesthetics during treatment. I predict this concept will continue to grow.

Zirconium/Porcelain Crown vs. Porcelain Fused to Metal (PFM):

All ceramic crowns (zirconium fused to porcelain) are slowly replacing metal fused to porcelain, especially in the smile zone because it's more aesthetic and natural, and it eliminates the metal which many do not want in their mouth.

Amalgam vs. Tooth-colored filling:

Even though amalgam fillings (mercury fillings) continue to be supported by the American Dental Association and other local dental organizations, fewer dentists are using amalgam as routine filling material, and a significant portion of U.S. dentists do not use mercury fillings at all. There is enough controversy over the toxicity of mercury fillings that many dentists use other materials to fill teeth.

Note: The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) requires dentists to dispose amalgam removed from a patient's mouth into a toxic waste container.

In this time of change and innovation in dentistry, the profession has never been so creative and exciting. Many of these changes are significant and influence the way people are being treated. By sharing some of these new trends, I hope to raise the level of awareness to what is developing in the dental world.

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