

Maintain or Risk the Long-Term Clinical Success of Oral Implants

“Maintenance of Dental implants”

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COLUMN ARTICLE

Millions of patients throughout the world are receiving dental implants for their treatment needs. It is estimated that by 2020 the Implant market will reach around 10 Billion US\$. With the improvements in the implant design and surface chemistry the success rate of dental implants has reached around 98-100%. This high success rate and confidence on dental implants (over compromised teeth) has fostered the illusion of control and is leading to overuse of dental implants. Many dentists and Periodontists are evading the hard-way of preserving the compromised natural teeth and finding it easy to remove a tooth and place an implant. Research, on the other hand, has suggested that well-treated natural teeth with healthy, however, reduced periodontal support are capable of functioning for a long time (10-20 years), provided the periodontal disease is removed and the patient is supported with an effective maintenance therapy.

It is surprising that human jaw bone can host implants (dental biomaterials) for such a long time. However, it is challenging to keep this relationship alive and to avoid associated biological complications. Peri-implant disease including peri-implant mucositis (inflammation confined to the soft tissues around implants - reversible) and peri-implantitis (inflammation of the soft and hard tissues around implants – irreversible and may lead to implant loss) can break this healthy relationship. The reported prevalence of peri-implant mucositis and peri-implantitis ranges from

21.6-38% and 11.2-47.1% respectively. Patients more likely to develop peri-implant disease include; non-compliant patients with poor oral hygiene care, smokers, patients with uncontrolled diabetes and in patients with cemented crowns due to residual cement. The effective treatment of the peri-implant disease relies on early diagnosis. As such, there are no evidence based guidelines for the management of peri-implant disease and hence dental professionals are using pragmatic approach to treat peri-implant disease.



Dental care professionals should carefully select patients for implant treatment. For the long-term success of implants, our patients require more maintenance and care than any other treatment including endodontic and prosthetic. A well-structured patient specific supportive pro-

gramme should be outlined and discussed with the patient before the start of treatment. A careful monitoring of the efficiency of the supportive program should be considered on every visit. This can be done by measuring peri-implant soft and hard tissue parameters using standard protocols. We can keep our implant patients happy for a longer period of time by being vigilant of implant associated problems.

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