Teamwork—For predictable outcomes

“Working as a team allows us to make the most of our individual strengths and knowledge”

Two doctors in the United States—one a general dentist, the other an oral surgeon—advocate a team approach to implant dentistry that creates a virtual clinic, consisting of a surgical specialist, an anesthesiologist, a restorative dentist and a dental technician or laboratory.

The Nobel Biocare team asked Drs Tarun Agarwal and Uday Reebye for some insights about teamwork in general and the All-on-4 treatment concept in particular.

How did you begin working together?

Dr Tarun Agarwal: I first met Uday while he was a medical student at the University of North Carolina. Later, after he completed his oral surgery residency and opened his practice here in North Carolina, I began sending him the surgical cases that I wasn’t comfortable tackling. Our professional relationship flourished when Uday encouraged me to participate and collaborate on our surgical cases. He was very open to sharing tips and tricks and even allowing me to participate in the surgery.

Dr Uday Reebye: At the same time, Tarun taught me about prosthetic and implant advancements that had a great impact on my work.

Dr Tarun Agarwal: It became pretty clear that the cases we did together were the cases that turned out best and went the smoothest. I think it was the strategic collaboration and taking the ‘holistic’ (surgical and restorative) approach to the case that made the difference.

For you, your dental practices and the patient: What are the main benefits of the team approach?

Dr Uday Reebye: Implant dentistry is rapidly evolving and its complexities require solid prosthetic and surgical knowledge. Working as a team allows us to make the most of our individual strengths and expertise.

Sharing knowledge is essential for making advances in our field. Many times the biggest
changes I make on my surgeries are due to what Tarun has taught me on the restorative side; and conversely, Tarun has changed his treatment planning and prosthetic planning since he began getting involved in surgeries.

**Dr Tarun Agarwal:** What’s more, I now have the confidence to tackle complex cases that I would never have even started in the past.

The patient is the real winner in our teamwork approach. They are provided with a seamless treatment experience. Each member of the team is focused on his or her core competency, which leads to better results.

I should also mention that practice productivity has steadily increased. As our mutual caseload has grown, so have referrals and our reputation within the community. It’s like a snowball gaining size and momentum going downhill.

_Would you say that you each bring different qualities to the partnership?_

**Dr Tarun Agarwal:** Without question. Dr Reebye is a dual degree (MD and DMD) board-certified Oral Maxillofacial Surgeon. His expertise and knowledge of surgery is light years ahead of mine. I am an esthetically-focused general dentist that has tremendous experience with digital dentistry.

By each having an open mind we are able to blend the digital technologies of restorative dentistry into the surgical world of complex implant dentistry. Over time, we have learned a great deal from each other, and now have a greater appreciation for the complexities and issues that each other deal with in the treatment process.

_Do you ever have a difference of opinion when it comes to planning the treatment?_

**Dr Tarun Agarwal:** Of course we do! Sometimes we have to bend on the surgical side and sometimes we have to bend on the restorative side...

**Dr Uday Reebye:** ...and it usually works out that whoever wins the argument has thought through the issue at hand a little longer and harder.

**Dr Uday Reebye:** It was an easy trade-off to make. At the end of the day, we resolve any differences of opinion guided by a single principle—to do what’s in the best interest of the patient.

_Is the All-on-4 treatment concept especially appropriate for your team approach?_

**Dr Uday Reebye:** Yes, in my eyes, the All-on-4 treatment concept can only be successful as a team effort. It is a beautiful treatment concept that marries surgical and prosthetic philosophies.

I have to tell you that teamwork brings a great deal of enjoyment to the clinic. If you are happy when working, patients are happier, assistants are happier, and somehow that brew results in great outcomes.

**Dr Tarun Agarwal:** It really does! In our team approach, the restorative dentist creates the case blueprint, the surgical specialist serves as an engineer—by verifying the blueprint is surgically...
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And finally—enjoy! It is a wonderful journey.

Note: The All-on-4 is a registered trademark of Nobel Biocare.

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Dr Tarun Agarwal: And because this treatment concept is more affordable for patients, a greater number of patients become implant candidates. For us, the All-on-4 treatment concept has virtually created a new market.

_What would you say to clinicians thinking about starting with the All-on-4 treatment concept?_

Dr Tarun Agarwal: Go learn about it with an open mind! There are literally millions of patients who can benefit from this treatment. Nobel Biocare has a predictable workflow with a tremendous support system to make you successful.

Dr Uday Reebye: Before I took my first All-on-4 class, all I heard from many clinicians (none of which had taken a class or done All-on-4 surgery), that the concept was flawed and a recipe for disaster. Seven years later, all I can say is that I am so happy we did not listen to them. My advice? ‘Keep an open mind, take a course, and see for yourselves what a great service you can provide for your patients!’

_For any clinicians out there looking to adopt a team approach like yours, is there a secret to successful partnership?_

Dr Tarun Agarwal: You have got to let go of your ego. We are all equals to the patient, after all, each bringing a different area of expertise to the team...

Dr Uday Reebye: ...and let me add this: Listen to your patients. Be willing to talk to other clinicians to share ideas, and never be afraid to reach out when you need help. Most of us love to share what we know with each other—to be of help and to learn more at the same time.

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Dr Tarun Agarwal (left): ‘Over time we have pushed each other to take a closer look at each other’s perspective.’

feasible—and the anesthesiologist is totally focused on patient comfort.

Starting with the endpoint in mind and collaborating to make it possible has routinely led to great outcomes.

_What do you see as the main benefits of the All-on-4 treatment concept, both for clinicians and patients?_

Dr Uday Reebye: We see so many edentulous or about-to-be edentulous patients who need new teeth. Previous treatment modalities were so expensive and difficult that these patients left our clinics depressed, with no hope in sight. The All-on-4 treatment concept allows us as clinicians to give hope to many patients who once had few or no encouraging options. Now we can dramatically change the lives of these patients for the better.