INTERVIEW
with — Dr. Stavros Pelekanos

Q: It is clear from your biography that you were educated internationally, having obtained your doctoral degree in Germany. You established your private practice in 1995, and since then have published over 30 articles and collaborated on several books. It seems that you have mastered both worlds—professional and academic. How do you see this from your perspective? What has been needed from your dental team to maintain the high-quality work for all this time?

A: Theory and practice can be so close and yet so far from each other. The time I spent at the University of Freiburg (under Prof. J.R. Strub) for my postgrad studies influenced my way of thinking with regard to the academic part of my life. At the same time, having the opportunity to work with excellent clinicians has challenged my future and given me the desire to combine both the academic and clinical world.

Lately, I took a big and difficult decision to quit the Greek University (Dental School of Athens) after serving it for 16 years consecutively. It’s all about choosing the right people to be with and work with. A team approach with highly qualified dentists, dental assistants and dental technicians is established in my office in Athens, giving me the opportunity to combine clinical work and lecturing.

Q: Looking at your intense international lecture schedule, you spend a substantial amount of time outside your office in Greece. What challenges does this bring to your work, and how do you manage to maintain a balance? Can you remember how many new passports you have had to get because the old ones were filled with stamps?

A: Traveling for lecturing has been very intense during the last six years, that’s true. Visiting new places and encountering different people and cultures has really been the interesting part, but keeping a balance between work and personal life has been the difficult part. Regarding the passports, I still remember the last one, which was so full of stamps and added pages that it was not accepted, although not expired!

Q: Everybody needs a mentor. Who has had the greatest impact on your professional work? Whom do you look up to?

A: As I already mentioned, Prof. J.R. Strub in Freiburg was my first mentor and had a major impact on my professional work. Having the opportunity to work closely with him and with Prof. Markus Hürzeler (associate professor at that time) influenced my way of thinking in dentistry, especially in combining prosthodontics and surgery. I strongly believe that a good implant surgeon has to master prosthodontics and a good prosthodontist has to master surgical procedures. The modern implantologist has to be trained in both disciplines.

Q: What is your professional focus at this point in your career?

A: Having been a part of the academic community and teaching prosthodontics at the University of Athens—I really loved teaching my postgrad students. My greatest passion though is treating patients at the highest level possible. This is only possible when one has a team that shares the same vision and passion with one and a place that inspires one. This is achieved in my private clinic based in Athens. I believe one can become a better teacher if one understands and masters the clinical reality.

Q: What is your scientific focus at this point in your career?

A: Placing and restoring a large number of implants in the last 20 years, especially in the esthetic zone, and being aware of the complications that can occur, my main focus is the transmucosal part of the implant—abutment complex. The mechanical connection, the kind of abutment, the materials used (chemistry and surface roughness) and the treatment sequence are some of my focus areas, which are described in a book chapter that was recently published (Implant Aesthetics: Keys to Diagnosis and Treatment; Springer, 2017). Subsequently, clinical online videos are also available via the e-book. New treatment modalities, like the use of intermediate single-unit abutments for single-implant restorations, and the impact of surface roughness modification on the soft tissue are points of interest and the subjects of research.

Q: You actively participate in several dental associations and groups that have different approaches to dentistry. Some of them appear to be very relaxed, like the one in Ibiza, Spain, and others seem very formal. What is your insider view on these different groups and their cultures? How important is that participation for your work?

A: Well … that’s true; that event in Ibiza was organized on Facebook among good friends and took place in a very relaxed atmosphere. It ended up being very successful and there has been great interest from dentists and companies for it to be continued on an annual basis.

In contrast, I am an active member of the European Academy of Esthetic Dentistry (EAED), one of the most important and prestigious groups in the world, with members who are pioneers, leaders and passionate clinicians in esthetic dentistry.
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Interview Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry

Attending and participating in those meetings (one closed and one open annually) is really challenging, stimulating discussions at a really high level and promoting dentistry. This year, the meeting will be held in Sorrento, Italy, on May 24–26, and Dr. Stefano Gracis, President of the EAED, has prepared an outstanding scientific program (under the theme of “Strategies in treatment planning: Efficiency vs reliability”; http://sorrento.eaed.org).

Q: How does the Milan session connect with the rest of the Clinical Masters™ in Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry program?
A: The Milan session takes place in one of the best organized facilities for prosthodontic courses in Europe, the Master Educational Group, and is presented together with Dr. Domenico Massironi, a pioneer in microscopic prosthodontics. Over these four days, in a really intensive and comprehensive session, participants have the opportunity to learn how to use and prepare teeth with a microscope during the first two days, while in the last two days, larger full-mouth cases are discussed, with demonstration and hands-on work, analyzing ways to alter the vertical dimension of occlusion with different centric relation techniques.

It’s a unique opportunity to take practical knowledge and apply it directly the next week.

Q: Can you tell us about your favorite instrument choices for the hands-on part of the program?
A: W&H’s Implantmed and Piezomed motors and handpieces, Hu-Friedy instruments, botiss biomaterials, MIS Implants Technologies, Butterfly Italia sutures and BoneModels. It is a part of my character that I don’t like to make compromises. Therefore, in my hands-on part of the program, I always like to use the instruments and materials that I use in my daily practice. The mentioned companies and products are part of my daily work.

W&H provides the best implant motor available on the market right now. With an integrated insertion torque measurement system, implant stability measurement (Implant Stability Quotient) and wireless foot control, it is easy to use and one of the most important tools during surgery. With just one click of the foot control, one can switch immediately to the piezoelectric surgery device, one of the most powerful on the market.

Of course, Hu-Friedy instruments with their unique design and precision are always to hand in every dental procedure. I can’t work without them.

botiss biomaterials is my personal choice for any regenerative procedure during surgeries. The products that I prefer and have mostly used during the last several years are collacone, cerabone, Jason fleece and the new permamem membrane.

The V3 implant from MIS with the new B+ surface and an innovative design is my choice when it comes to implants. Besides surgery and owing to my prosthodontic background, the variety and precision of the prosthetic options makes my life easier, providing my patients with the highest quality possible.

Finally, when it comes to teaching, I believe BoneModels is a very reliable company for surgical and prosthetic hands-on courses. The quality of the soft and hard tissue is unique, imitating real human tissue. Procedures like immediate implant placement and temporization, soft- and hard-tissue augmentation, and sinus lift are some of the clinical procedures that can be performed and demonstrated on these models.

Q: Recently you started using one of the most innovative implants on the market—V3. What got you interested in this new concept, and what have your experiences been so far?
A: V3 is a really innovative concept providing a triangular shape at the coronal part of the implant body. This helps to reduce the pressure at the usually thin coronal part of the crestal bone, preventing bone resorption. Regarding prostheses, different possibilities, such as concave-shaped single-unit abutments and single anti-rotational multiunit abutments for single-implant restorations, provide a variety of solutions for every case. More recently, an amazing innovative internal connection single unit abutment came to the market, making prosthetics and the concept I love (one-time abutment) even more successful.

Q: Your big passions are skiing and kitesurfing. What do you enjoy about these sports? What ski resorts and kite locations can you recommend as your favorites?
A: That’s true. That’s my second passion besides dentistry. I cannot imagine myself without sport activities, with skiing and kitesurfing being two of them. My favorite ski resorts are Zermatt–Cervinia in Europe and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in the U.S.

For kitesurfing, I would definitely recommend my favorite Greek island, which is Paros and Aruba in the Caribbean Sea.

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