Why education?

As the use of cone beam computed tomography increases worldwide, so has the need for proper education on what this imaging modality represents. We, as clinicians, no longer live in a two-dimensional world... as three-dimensional technology surrounds us all, every single day. However, do we really know what we need to know about to use this imaging modality properly?

When we upgrade to a new smartphone, such as Apple's iPhone or any other brand that promises a multi-mega-pixel camera, improved video resolution, an endless supply of 'apps', texting, FaceTime, Bluetooth connectivity, etc, do we actually spend time reading the manual to learn how all of the new and improved features work? Are we even aware that a manual exists? When we have a problem with our new smartphone, when we cannot figure out how a special feature works, what can we do? If you go online and search for the answer, it may exist in the form of a posting from a knowledgeable source, or perhaps there is a link to a YouTube video where someone has taped a step-by-step description of how that special feature works. The same applies to that new digital camera you may have purchased, or received as a gift. How do you know how to change from a 4:3 aspect ratio, to 16:9, or the panoramic layout to take that perfect picture, and then once the photo is taken, how do you manage to get the image from the camera to your computer, or to a printer so that you can have a hard copy of that perfect picture? Who is teaching us how to manage technology today? Or are we just managing to learn only the very basic commands to allow us to function appropriately in our everyday lives? Are we only using a small percentage of the power that technology offers?

When we, as clinicians, use the dataset from a CBCT scan, are we just managing with the basics of interpreting the DICOM data? Do we really understand the impressive capabilities of the interactive treatment planning software that is packaged with the machine, or software that exists on your laptop computer? The questions continue. Who is teaching us how to manage all of this new data that is delivered after each scan is taken? Where can we learn how to improve and maximize our skill set to properly navigate through the wonderful modality of 3-D imaging? How can we best expand our knowledge base to provide our patients with the most state-of-the-art care?

One of the goals of our cone beam magazine is to showcase the variety of ways that clinicians can utilize CBCT technology. We hope that our loyal readers will continue to gain valuable information that can be directly applied to their daily practice. While it is a small step in the educational process, it is our desire to help motivate clinicians worldwide to try and learn as much about this technology as possible, to improve their skill set, go beyond the 'basics', and then help to educate others. It may be a simple as reading the manual, or using a cotton roll (see inside)!

Please enjoy this year’s first issue of cone beam!

Dr Scott D. Ganz
Editor-in-Chief