“The silent assistant for efficient relative isolation for nearly all indications”

Using the OptraGate lip and cheek retractor in daily dental practice

An interview with Dr Patrick Dipsche, Germany

When it comes to successful dental treatment, it is not only important to use solutions that facilitate the dentist’s work; physical comfort of the patient is equally important. With OptraGate, dental manufacturer Ivoclar Vivadent has introduced a lip and cheek retractor that considerably facilitates isolation of the treatment area in a multitude of dental procedures while being gentle and comfortable to wear for the patient. In the following interview, Dr Patrick Dipsche, German orthodontist, speaks about the benefits of the product for both patients and practitioners.

In which treatment situations do you especially like using OptraGate?

Dr Patrick Dipsche: As an orthodontist, I particularly like using OptraGate for intra-oral scanning and indirect bonding of lingual brackets. My assistants like to use it in the provision of prophylactic care, as they often perform these tasks alone and appreciate the effective retraction of the lips and cheeks that this device offers.

In your opinion, what are the key advantages of the product?

Although it may not seem so at first, OptraGate can actually be positioned easily and quickly in the patient’s mouth. This is something I greatly value. An auxiliary such as a lip and cheek retractor must be easy and quick to use in order to be integrated into regular treatment procedures.

How does OptraGate help you in your workflow?

I would say that the gentle and effective retraction of the lips and cheeks is the most helpful feature and this feature also makes it considerably easier to achieve relative isolation. I do not have to move the tissues out of the way with the mirror all the time and I can concentrate more intensely on the actual treatment.

Would you say that OptraGate allows you to work more efficiently?

Yes. As I can concentrate more intensely on the actual treatment procedure, I automatically work faster. This generally has a favourable effect on my treatment results. Is this not the definition of efficiency? The output is the same at least, if not better, while the use of resources is optimised. In this context, my resource is time and my output is the treatment result. I would say that I save about 5 minutes per patient on average.

What do your patients tell you after they have been treated with it?

Well, no patient ever likes wearing a retractor. However, I definitely feel that they tolerate OptraGate better than rigid retractors. This is, of course, a positive reaction from my patients.

Do you feel that your patients find it comfortable to wear OptraGate?

I definitely feel that they tolerate OptraGate better than rigid retractors, because it is made of soft material and flexibly adapts to movements. However, subjective perceptions of comfort have to be taken with a grain of salt. All patients prefer not to be restricted in their movements. Compared with the existing alternatives, however, OptraGate always elicits a positive reaction from my patients.

Is it easy to place in the patient’s mouth?

Yes, in most cases. At first, it takes a bit of time to get used to it. However, once one has got the hang of it, it pops into the correct position almost by itself.

How do you select the appropriate size for the patient?

So far, this has been a matter of judgement because the manufacturer did not previously provide specific instructions in this respect. However, the new blue and pink variations include an orientation aid printed on the packaging to assist in choosing the correct size. In my opinion, this scale works really well. One simply estimates the distance between the corners of the mouth (taking the slight curve of the lip into account) and then selects the most suitable size with the help of the guide marks.

How would you describe OptraGate in one sentence?

Hmm... the silent assistant for efficient relative isolation for nearly all indications.

I really like the product. Particularly when I have no assistant on hand to help out, it is an exceptionally useful auxiliary for which there is no real alternative. Once one has got the hang of it, one would not want to do without it.

Thank you very much for the interview.

Dr Patrick Dipsche

The oral device can be used for a wide range of applications, including intra-oral scanning, the placement of indirect restorations, orthodontic treatment and paediatric dentistry.

The most important step is choosing the correct size. Surprisingly, an OptraGate that is too small appears to be more difficult to insert than one that is slightly too large. Once the two lateral tabs have been positioned, it is also important to ask the patient to slightly close his or her mouth to allow the soft tissue to relax. In this way, OptraGate can easily be slipped into the upper and lower vestibules. If the correct size has been chosen, it pops into the correct position almost by itself.