Change requires motivation

The iTOP approach to oral prophylaxis

By DTI

Despite advances in oral health care, patients and dental professionals remain uncertain about good oral hygiene, particularly regarding interdental cleaning. Prof. Denis Bourgeois, Dean of the University of Lyon’s dental faculty in France, has presented scientific evidence that interdental brushes are efficient tools for interrupting the biofilm between teeth. In order to use these correctly, dental professionals need to offer a certain level of individual instruction to their patients. How can this be achieved easily?

According to Bourgeois, the majority of his studies have found a positive significant difference in the plaque index when using an interdental brush compared with floss. In general, interdental brushes were found to be more effective in removing plaque compared with brushing alone or the combined use of toothbrushing and dental floss. Establishing the accessibility and widths of the interdental spaces should therefore be part of the routine examination of all patients. An interdental brush that is sized correctly for each space is easy to handle and atraumatic, yet effective. However, this routine examination needs to be taught.

In fact, one major problem with interdental cleaning is that patients have always been patient ability and motivation. “Interdental cleaning does not readily become an established part of daily oral hygiene,” according to Bourgeois. Damage to the interdental papillae and abrasive trauma to the dental surface result from a lack of motivation and instruction. From a clinical perspective, it is therefore necessary to emphasise individual instruction and selection of high-quality oral hygiene products. The ultimate goal should be a high level of cleanliness with little or no harm to either soft or hard tissue. Oral prophylaxis should therefore be taught individually to dental professionals and not in lectures. By correcting and repeating the right cleaning technique, prevention of oral and systemic disease can be achieved.

Change through motivation: The iTOP programme

The iTOP (individually trained oral prophylaxis) programme covers the necessary techniques, knowledge and instructions for dental professionals. This established educational system provides simple and practical training for dental staff, who can then apply this approach to their dental hygiene delivery and teach an effective prevention technique to their patients. All iTOP seminars are led by independent dentists and dental hygienists who have completed the courses themselves. Only iTOP facilitates individual training with regular check-ups and corrections to the prophylaxis techniques learnt.

The iTOP trainers use the principle of “Touch to Teach” in their seminars. “Only someone who has experienced it in his or her mouth knows the exact pressure of an interdental brush and understands the importance of oral hygiene and can thus teach this to others,” said Dr Jiří Sedelmaier, founder of iTOP. Through the iTOP approach, which combines efficient tools with thorough knowledge of cleaning techniques, dental professionals and patients can achieve optimum and sustainable oral health. In 2016, 200 seminars were held in 44 countries.

Four-day English-speaking course in Vietnam

The next iTOP teacher will take place in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam from 24 May 2017. The four-day course offers theoretical and practical training. The intensive theoretical part includes presentations by several international iTOP lecturers covering the main topics of this prophylaxis approach in more detail.

In the practical part, certified instructors will demonstrate the requisite instruments and techniques using the “Touch to Teach” principle. Around 22 participants from seven countries are expected to attend. “Our iTOP seminars will allow you to experience motivation and education from the patient’s perspective and transmit this knowledge to your patients in an individual and tailored way,” said Dr Ana Stevanovi, Head of Education at iTOP. Introductory and advanced iTOP seminars in Ho Chi Minh City are being offered on 30 and 31 May as well as 1 June.

Dental professionals interested in attending can obtain more information at info@itop-dental.com.

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Stronger together

An interview with Jean-François Tivoly, CEO of the TIVOLY group, and Christian Fontaine, CEO of FFDM Pneumat

By DT France

In October 2016, the TIVOLY group acquired the FFDM group. The two companies specialise in the design and production of cutting tools. Both trace their origins to the same familial and industrial culture dating back to the early twentieth century. The acquisition is part of TIVOLY’s development strategy, aimed at strengthening its industrial base and consolidating its position in aeronautics and its investments in expanding markets like medical devices. FFDM will benefit by having a stronger base for its investments, especially in research and development. The aim is to renew and strengthen their respective offerings and to put the THOMAS brand at the forefront of the dental market, in the context of tightening regulation and increased competition from Asian products. Dental Tribune France met with TIVOLY CEO Jean-François Tivoly and FFDM Pneumat CEO Christian Fontaine.

What are the secret ingredients that make a partnership successful?

Christian Fontaine: The founding of both of these family companies was based on a commitment to the service of society. Lucien Tivoly, for example, built his first factory to manufacture the cutting tools essential to the arms industry during the First World War, and FFDM was established during the Second World War. One war may have separated us, but we share common values. Throughout our history, we have always striven for progress and concentrated our efforts on becoming a centre of excellence regarding our core business. Our teams have the ability to listen and share a spirit of open-mindedness that fuels innovation. We are, in fact, creating added value, by using an approach that focuses on adapting our products and services to the needs of today’s consumers. Our aim is not simply to anticipate their expectations, but to surpass them.

For example, in the era of smartphones, no tool is available to dismantle, clean and repair these devices, so we created a toolkit to address the problem. It is difficult for dental surgeons to remove posts of any kind from root canals, so FFDM, along with Prof. Pierre Machoux, improved an existing kit, the Gonon kit, which is now used in innumerable dental practices around the world. Whatever the problem, our expertise and knowledge of precision tools for the machining of materials can always provide a concrete, tailor-made solution. The exchanges that will inevitably be created between the teams in charge of research and development will definitely enable us to serve new markets linked to our craftsman origins.

Mr Tivoly, could you briefly introduce us to your company?

Jean-François Tivoly: TIVOLY is a family business that was established in 1917 and has its headquarters in Savoy. It is a highly international industrial company that designs and manufactures cutting tools (drills, milling cutters, taps, etc.) and the related accessories. TIVOLY is a publicly traded company (Boursenext) and its annual turnover is €85 million (one full year with FFDM).

TIVOLY is structured around two business units. The first, the consumer unit, supplies tools for the construction, DIY and industrial maintenance markets. The second, the industrial unit, offers machining solutions for industry, for example the aeronautic and automobile industries. At present, FFDM’s dental offering is part of the industrial unit at group level, but with a view to these activities being expanded, it seems logical to create a medical unit at group level, encompassing dental products at first, but eventually including all of the other areas we have planned for the future. TIVOLY is aiming for strong growth, strengthened over the next few years by its products and international positioning. To speed this growth up further, TIVOLY making other acquisitions is a possibility, on condition that these are part of its strategy.

Which indicators make you believe medicine is the field of the future?

Tivoly: Dentistry, which is an FFDM specialty, is part of the broader field of medicine. Globally, it is widely believed that this area will continue growing. Indeed, populations always continue to increase in number and age. In many areas, such as India, Africa and China—where we have a factory—living standards are improving, and as the proportion of income spent on necessities decreases, more income is left over to invest in health.

However, there is strong competition in the medical equipment field, with many companies of various sizes—some quite modest—in France. The market and technolo-
Mr Fontaine, could you tell us about FFDM?

Fontaine: FFDM, with its THOMAS brand, is a French company that has been active in the dental field for over 70 years, along with the companies NICHROMINOX, Anthogyr and MICRO-MEGA. This seniority explains our strong international presence. We are present in over 65 countries with our own brands and/or under the trademarks of our distributors, and more than 80 per cent of our annual turnover comes from exports. The first dental products produced by FFDM were milling cutters in 1946, sold under our THOMAS brand or private labels (under our clients’ brands). Our THOMAS range was then expanded through the manufacture and sale of conventional endodontic files, marketing Gonon extraction kits, etc.

Parallel to developing in the dental industry, FFDM has expanded its knowledge base into the industrial area through the design, production and sale of cutting tools and assembly solutions, also under the THOMAS trademark, and the design, manufacture and sale of machinery and assembly solutions under the Pneumat trademark. Today, we are recognised as a major and essential partner.

Getting back to the dental field, we have designed dental implant drills for about 20 years. This activity has been a strong lever for our company’s growth. We currently work with some 50 implant companies across the world, many of which are very well known, demonstrating our expertise and quality products in this domain. We have more than doubled our turnover in the past decade, owing to a highly sustainable investment and development policy. More recently, we have invested over 10 per cent of our annual turnover. We now have an assemblage of modern, high-performance machines at our disposal. We will continue following this approach in the future, so we can provide our clients with an even better service.

Now, we have a stakeholder that is a family-managed manufacturer just like FFDM has been since it was founded. It was surprising to discover the similarity of the industrial paths that the TIVOLY group and FFDM have taken. We are now part of a group that employs over 500 members of staff, with commercial and manufacturing plants in many countries, spanning three continents. Jamy Tivoly, the grandson of the founder, was recently honoured with a distinguished national award in recognition of his remarkable industrial career.

How do you see the future, and what are your plans?

Fontaine: Currently, our implant drills are sold exclusively to implantology companies. The drills are made according to specifications from these companies (we are subcontractors; our brand name never appears on the instruments). We intend to offer a range of standard drills to be sold under our THOMAS trademark with our own CE marking. The aim is to sell these directly to distributors and practitioners to boost the THOMAS brand and give it greater visibility. With standard drills, another advantage for interested implantology companies would be that they would not have to take care of the CE marking themselves, as this would be an additional service we would offer them.

We plan to strengthen our technical and regulatory services to help our clients with their new products throughout all the stages of registration. We also intend extending our product ranges (mainly the endodontic range) so we can provide complete solutions to our clients.

We also have our sights set on other markets, like cutting tools for the ancillary orthopaedic segment. We have strengthened our collaboration with well-known dentists to gain greater visibility on the market. We have achieved this in the past with Prof. Machotou with immense success.

Online sales is also an area we are looking into. Through integration into TIVOLY, which guarantees committed and transparent management, we now have the financial capacity to implement all of our development projects, both industrial and commercial. TIVOLY’s commercial and industrial sites in Europe, Asia and North America will give us access to facilities that are closer to our clients and to our markets.

Thank you very much for the interview. Combining your respective expertise should enable you to achieve even greater things. We hope you enjoy many successes together.