The importance of going slow

By Dr Miguel Stanley

For the longest time, I have been talking about how important it is to practise Slow Dentistry. Never before has it made more sense to take the appropriate amount of time to correctly disinfect your hands and properly disinfect the treatment room in between patients. In my practice, this has been standard protocol for over 20 years. What it really means behind the scenes is that, as a rule, we never see more than one patient per hour per dental chair and we properly disinfect the treatment room in between patients.

To be clear, I am not saying a dentist cannot see 30 patients a day, you can see as many patients a day as you can. If you can perform your treatment with quality quickly and safely, that is fine. What cannot happen is a fast turnover time in between patients. All clinics must invest a minimum of 30 minutes in between appointments to properly disinfect all surfaces.

Now if you are managing a practice, it is legitimate to accept that one of your primary objectives is financial profit. It is normal and healthy in any business. The problem is where do you draw the line between risking your health and the health of those around you in order to make a profit?

We are all now paying far more attention to the importance of properly disinfecting all surfaces. Like recently reported in an article, the recent global pandemic due to the SARS-CoV-2 virus has raised awareness of the problem of cross-contamination by viral particles on surfaces and fabrics and how these pathogens can stay active for a long period.

Obviously, my medical training at university taught me the importance of properly tackling this problem, so when I started managing my own practice, I was presented with one simple choice to see many patients a day to make more profit, at the risk of cross-contamination, or to reduce the number of patients and invest correctly in gold standard disinfection protocols, even if that meant less in the register at the end of the pay day. Obviously, I chose the latter, and it has been standard practice in my universe for my entire career. This means that at the end of the year, my financial figures might not be as positive as a potential investor would like to see, but I am almost certain that there is no risk and certainly not conducive to our patients and me making a profit if they started practising Slow Dentistry. They simply could not afford to invest the appropriate amount of time in between patients. This means that many business models for dental provision practised around the world today choose profit over safety.

What are you going to do to change this? Email enquiries@slowdentistry.com to learn how you can join our global network and help to collectively shift the paradigm.

For more information: www.slowdentistry.com

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