AAE: Issue in implant debate comes down to saving teeth

Sierra Rendon
DT America

CHICAGO, IL, USA: The American Association of Endodontists (AAE) has expressed serious concerns over recent assertions by the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID). According to the endodontist group, the implantologist group’s position reinforces outdated myths about root canal treatment.

A press release distributed by the AAID on 21 September positioned implants as a better option than root canal treatment for a variety of reasons, including higher success rates and lower financial burdens—claims that root canal specialists say are inaccurate and misleading to potential patients.

“Not only has it been proven that both treatments have the same success rates,” said Dr Gerald N. Glickman, president of the AAE, “but several studies show that root-canal treated teeth are retained at about 95 to 97 per cent after eight years, versus implant retention of 85 to 90 per cent during a similar time period. The AAID chose to ignore the scientific literature in its news release.”

Dr Glickman also noted the inference that diseased teeth are not worth saving, which he said does a disservice to both patients and the dental profession as a whole.

“Do patients with a broken arm expect their doctor to give them a prosthetic arm?” he asked. “Why would the same patients believe they need to get a prosthetic tooth screwed into their jaw if the real tooth could be healed?”

Saving teeth is not so much a matter of ‘dental heroics’ as it is serving the best interests of the patient, and root canal specialists proudly do so in a manner that is consistent with the American Dental Association’s Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct.

“And arguments that root canal treatment is more costly are fatuous,” Dr Glickman added. “Recent research has proven that saving the natural tooth with a root canal rarely requires follow-up treatment and generally lasts a lifetime; implants, on the other hand, have more post-operative complications, and therefore would probably present the more significant financial burden.”

Dr Glickman recognises that there are cases when a tooth cannot be saved, for which implants would be a realistic option. He pointed out that root canal specialists are ideally qualified to make such a determination with a patient’s general dentist, and that all dental professionals are ethically obligated to inform patients of all available treatment options. “This whole paradigm is ultimately not about which treatment modality is better, but what is best for each patient. And that is the preservation of the natural dentition,” he said.
Straumann introduces new implant material

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

LEIPZIG, Germany: Straumann’s dental implant alloy Roxolid is now available to dentists in Europe. Following the recent launch in North America, the material was introduced at the 18th Annual Meeting of the European Association for Osseointegration (EAO) in Monaco. Roxolid combines high tensile and fatigue strengths with excellent osseointegration, according to the latest clinical research. It is designed to increase reliability and confidence, especially with small diameter implants.

Involved 60 centres and more than 500 patients, Roxolid has been tested in one of the largest clinical research programmes ever undertaken by a dental implant company in recent years. Currently, two other large multi-centre clinical trials are in progress.

Company officials announced that the clinical programme has been extended to include studies specifically investigating the need for bone augmentation and the performance of Roxolid in the front of the mouth in narrow spaces. In addition, preclinical testing has been broadened to investigate healing characteristics and to draw direct comparisons with other titanium alloys.

Roxolid is available in 0.5 mm Bone and Soft Tissue Level implants.

Americans cut down on dental visits

San Francisco, CA, USA: While the economy is beginning to show signs of a slow recovery, many consumers in the US are struggling with financial challenges, some of which could affect their health. A survey released by the American Optometric Association (AOA) has revealed that 36 per cent of Americans limited their visits to doctor because of the recession.

When asked which doctors they are visiting less, the majority indicated dentist (63 per cent), followed by primary care physician (59 per cent) and optometrist (52 per cent). Only 8 per cent indicated that they are adhering to their regular health schedule.

For the fourth year in a row, the AOA’s American Eye-Q survey found that consumers worry more about losing their vision (43 per cent), than their memory (32 per cent) or their ability to walk (12 per cent).

“The concept of losing vision appears very concrete to people, which may be why people cut back on other doctor visits first,” said Minnesota Optometric Association Board of Trustees member, Dr Jill Hadler (Bright Eyes Vision Clinic, Otsego).

“We know that many eye and vision problems have no obvious signs or symptoms, so early diagnosis and treatment are critical. We encourage individuals to consider eye and vision care as an integral part of their overall health, so cutting back on any aspect of health care is not a good idea.”

The fourth annual American Eye-Q survey was drafted and commissioned in conjunction with Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates (PSB). PSB conducted online interviews between 21 and 24 May 2009 with 1,000 Americans 18 years and older who were deemed sufficiently representative of the US population.

(Edited by Daniel Zimmermann, DTI)
Claims of mercury to cause autism rejected

New study finds similar levels in autistic and normal kids

WASHINGTON, DC, USA: Children with autism have mercury levels similar to those of other kids, suggesting the mysterious disorder is caused by a range of factors rather than “a single smoking gun”, researchers at the University of California, Davis, said. They found that children aged 2 to 5 with autism had mercury levels lower than other children because the autistic kids ate less fish, the biggest source of mercury that shows up in the blood. But when the data were adjusted for lower fish consumption, blood-mercury concentrations among the autistic children were roughly similar to those developing typically.

The children with autism had mercury levels in line with national norms. The findings, published online in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives, come at a time when advocates including parents argue that mercury found in fish, dental fillings, vaccines and industrial emissions are responsible for autism. The debate became more vehement recently after the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said autism was more common than previously thought, affecting one in 91 children, including about one in 58 boys.

“It’s time to abandon the idea that a single smoking gun will emerge to explain why so many children are developing autism,” said Irv Hertz-Picciotto, who led the study. “Just as autism is complex, with great variation in severity and presentation, it is highly likely that its causes will be found to be equally complex,” she said in a statement.

Autism refers to a spectrum of diseases, from severe and profound inability to communicate and mental retardation to relatively mild symptoms. The research area is due for a large infusion of money from President Barack Obama’s US$5 billion plan to boost US medical and scientific research.

Activists noted that the University of California study did not seek to find out whether mercury might cause autism because the children’s blood levels were measured after autism had been diagnosed.

“The results of this study are limited in terms of ruling in or out a link between mercury exposure and autism causation or severity,” said Sallie Bernard, executive director of the advocacy group SafeMinds.

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(Edited by Daniel Zimmermann, DTI)
New York meeting to showcase innovative programmes

NEW YORK, NY, USA: As hosts of the largest dental meeting in the USA, the organisers of the Greater New York Dental Meeting (GNYDM) feel they have an obligation to the exhibitors and attendees to excel in presenting a convention that showcases the latest products, procedures and technologies modern dentistry has to offer. To this end, the 2009 GNYDM, to be held from 27 November to 2 December, will feature a wide array of new programmes.

In 2008, some 57,854 attendees from 125 countries participated. Pre-registration for 2009 suggests that the number of attendees this year will be even higher.

Dental technology is advancing at an astounding rate. Thus, the Pride Institute and the GNYDM are partnering for the first Technology Fair that will run for four days and take place on the newly expanded exhibition floor. On 29 and 30 November, the Pride Institute and the GNYDM are partnering for the first Technology Fair that will run for four days and take place on the newly expanded exhibition floor. On 29 and 30 November, the Pride Institute and the GNYDM will again partner with Align Technology to hold its second educational event Invisalign-GNYDM Expo, which will offer numerous programmes that will help dental teams learn the logistics of tooth alignment with Invisalign from some of the finest clinicians in the world.

As Invisalign has grown so rapidly in popularity, the 2009 meeting will feature four days of Invisalign programmes for the entire dental team. With such a diverse range of educational Invisalign programmes offered, there is something for everyone on the team.

All courses will be taught by Invisalign experts and will take place in the Invisalign Pavilion on the exhibition floor. “In 2008, the Invisalign event attracted more than 1,200 registrants, and we are expecting even greater participation this year,” said GNYDM General Chairperson Dr Clifford Salin.

The noteworthy line-up included 20 international speakers from India, the UK, Germany, Austria, the USA, and, of course, France. Over the course of two days, scientific sessions and workshops enlightened participants on diverse topics, such as predictable bite registration, modern concepts and risk factors in aesthetic dentistry, aesthetic dilemmas and solutions, the use of composites, anterior restorations, and the therapeutic advantages of chairside CAD/CAM.

With an impressive case demonstrating total facial aesthetics, which was certainly a highlight of the meeting and earned a generous applause from the audience, Dr Kurt Vuuren (Austria) opened attendees’ eyes to what is possible beyond aesthetic dentistry. Sought-after lecturers Prof. Bernard Touati (France) and Dr Sasha Jovanovic (USA) concluded the meeting with their respective lectures via live web conference from Los Angeles.

ESCD places focus on patients

PARIS, France/LEIPZIG, Germany: Members and friends of the European Society of Cosmetic Dentistry (ESCD) meet in Paris for their 6th annual meeting. Two hundred attendees from Denmark, Croatia, Serbia, Germany, Hungary, and even as far as Australia travelled to the French capital to learn about the newest techniques and products, to mingle with colleagues and to enjoy some of the countless Parisian attractions.

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Minimally invasive dentistry and an interdisciplinary approach to aesthetic dentistry were the focus of most lectures. For instance, Dr George Kirtley (USA), the creator of the Envision A Smile cosmetic imaging system, highlighted the importance of an interdisciplinary approach and reminded the audience that “we treat patients, not just teeth!” Oftentimes, aesthetic improvements are the collaborative effort of many different specialists, such as orthodontists, periodontists, and in some cases also psychologists and nutritionists, he added.

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