“Our company is well equipped to provide education to dentists from anywhere in the world”

An interview with Dr McGann, Progressive Orthodontics, USA

Dr McGann

Owing to popular demand, global orthodontics education provider Progressive Orthodontics has announced the re-opening of its Singapore location in 2009. The two-year Orthodontics class, run by Dr Oliver Hennedige and his wife Irene Hennedige, will begin on 15 January 2009 with the closing date for discounts for early registration. Irene Hennedige, will begin on 15 January 2009 with the closing date for discounts for early registration.

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Dr McGann, what are the shortfalls of orthodontic education nowadays?

The programmes outside of the universities are too short to learn comprehensive orthodontics. With only 48 days, the programme I designed is the longest, but I consider this a minimum for orthodontic education.

Then there is the problem of educators not being practical, showing only their best cases, or even just the best portions of a case. The trusting dentist returns to their practice, applies the incomplete information to a trusting patient, and has less than expected results.

But not all is the fault of the educator, as every student is in control of his or her destiny. For a dentist to start and finish an orthodontic case successfully in the beginning of their career, they need help from someone with experience. We feel it is our responsibility as educators to offer help and experience. We therefore spend most of our time outside of the classroom providing support for students and graduates in a centralised location.

The dental studies at home, coming to the live seminar, then goes back and studies some more.

Both ways work from an education viewpoint. The IAT student is usually academically better at the end than the live seminar student, while the live seminar student is better at diagnosis and the practical aspect. The most diligent student takes both programmes: the live seminars and the internet study. We do not charge extra for any of our seminars and students pay only once in their life. If they are great at ortho, our programme gets a good reputation, and that is how we want it.

What are the latest trends in orthodontics, and how does your programme reflect these trends?

First of all, I believe I have developed the most accurate, most predictable diagnosis system in orthodontics today, and that includes the specialty. I developed computer software over a ten-year period that allows you to know where you are going with each diagnosis before you start the case. I have created a template treatment plan that enable dentists to write the most effective plan for treatment on a case-by-case basis.

I do not know of an actual ‘trend’ in the profession to technology-driven diagnosis and treatment, but we have it. I view the trend in the specialty as staying the same, it is ‘good enough’, which to me is not good enough when there is something better. I have eliminated the guesswork from diagnosis, removing bad diagnosis from the clinic. This is one reason that our orthodontic system works so smoothly in the treatment of orthodontics.

Then there is the trend in the specialty to use customised fixed appliances. Brackets and archwires designed for the individual patient, not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ type approach, which is what the straight archwire appliance, used for the past 55 years, are all about. The specialty has been unable to overcome the technical and distribution problems of single-patient appliances. Then there is the additional education needed for the orthodontist to diagnose which is the best appliance for a given patient and treatment situation.

This I solved with the development of the individual patient appliance. You need more education, a computer, and today’s shipping to do work. Five years and 100,000+ cases say it works, and it does. The difference is like flying a bicycle or driving a nice car. The job is done more efficiently, as in less doctor time, and with better treatment results.

You are offering CE programmes to dentists in Singapore again in 2009. What has driven this decision?

We had a very respectable programme in orthodontic training in Singapore for many years, teaching the straight archwire appliance and no computer software used for diagnosis. But when the change was made to individual patient orthodontics, which requires a change in materials and learning computer software, we found resistance in that market. Progressive Orthodontics will only teach the way we believe is the best for the student and the treatment if they can be open enough to learn some computer software, how to diagnose a customised fixed appliance, and the many advanced methods that I have developed for treatment. This includes skeletal anchorage, corticotomy, and orthodontics without the need for orthognathic surgeries.

Where in the Asia Pacific region will you offer additional courses?

We want to spread quality, comprehensive ortho education, to help general practitioners around the world. We are interested in teaching in any location that can gather a group of enthusiastic dentists of sufficient class size to make the business aspect work. But we cannot service every city and town in the world. We only have 50 instructors, so regional education is the answer.

Singapore will be the centre for the Asian region, and we will be offering our complete live series in Singapore. Many other Asian students also choose to learn through our IAT concept, and in this way limit geographical concerns. In the future, based on demand, we are looking at offering possible Asian-based IAT courses or potentially live locations, where demand justifies expanding the resources.

Countries like China or India are fast developing markets. In the future, are you planning to offer your courses there as well?

I believe China and India have the potential to be very good markets for our courses in the future. There is a large population, and they appear to have the desire to improve their skills. As the economies in these countries continue to develop, I believe that a significant portion of...
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China investment breaks record

BEIJING and SHANGHAI, China: Venture capitalists continue to invest in Mainland China with US$964 million put into 59 deals during the third quarter, up 22 per cent from the US$790 million invested in 75 deals during the same period last year, according to new regional statistics from Dow Jones VentureSource. Through the first nine months of 2008, China-based companies have raised US$3.29 billion in venture capital, more than the previous annual record of US$2.88 billion set in 2001.

“It’s clear that venture capital investors are still eager to put money into this emerging marketplace and, in many areas, they’ve actually accelerat- ing the pace of their investments,” said Jessica Canning, Global Research Director for Dow Jones VentureSource. “Already this year, the Business and Financial Services, Consumer Goods and Consumer Services industries—three areas closely tied to emerging economies due to their focus on retail, manufacturing, media and advertising—have set annual investment records.”

Specifically, Dow Jones VentureSource found that China’s Consumer Services industry accounted for US$267 million in investment with nine deals completed in the third quarter, up 57 per cent from the US$170 million put into 15 deals during the same period last year. Overall, through the first nine months of 2008, the industry has seen a record US$731 million invested in 37 deals. Within Consumer Services, US$143 million was invested in four deals for retail companies in the third quarter.

“Larger deals drove investment in the third quarter as the median size of a venture deal in China remained at $10 million, which is the highest on record and the most out of any region we track, including the US,” Ms Canning adds. “In the third quarter, we also saw the vast majority of deals and capital investments in China go to companies that are already generating revenues or are profitable.”

While the majority of capital, some US$640 million, went to companies that raised second or later-stage rounds, smaller early-stage deals were more prevalent. Seed and first rounds made up 65 per cent of all venture rounds in China during the third quarter, while second rounds made up 22 per cent of the deal count and later-stage rounds accounted for 15 per cent.

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Thank you very much for the interview.