CBCT technology: Informed dentists make informed decisions

Imagine a technology that brings the most detailed knowledge of the patient’s dental anatomy and greater treatment predictability right into the dental office. A good imagination is no longer necessary to achieve that goal. That technology, CBCT imaging, is not just a dental daydream but also a reality every day in many dental offices nationally and internationally.

Before and after investing in CBCT, many professionals take advantage of educational opportunities to grow their knowledge of this imaging method. On June 25 and 26, in La Jolla, Calif., Imaging Sciences International and Gendex Dental Systems will be hosting the fourth International Congress on 3-D Dental Imaging. There, dental professionals will hear about 3-D’s past, its present uses and successes, and future implications. The two-day symposium offers insights into field-of-view options for various specialties, detailed clinical application and hands-on training with 3-D planning software programs, and discussions of legal issues.

Three-dimensional technology is already redefining dental outcomes across a broad spectrum of treatment options, including implants, bone grafting, oral surgery, orthodontics and endodontics. The ability to capture a 3-D image of the mouth and to view it from all angles, together with the capability of rotating that 3-D mode and zooming in on details, can only result in more effective dental treatment.

With cone beam, all of the information can be coordinated for integration with other applications, such as guided implant placement software or CAD/CAM. The recent integration of E4D and i-CAT/GXCB-500™ allows clinicians to combine high-resolution three-dimensional cone-beam scan data and digital impression scan data so that they can simultaneously plan implants and restorations together in one cohesive system (Fig. 1). Software navigates the clinician through this process and ultimately reduces the risk of poorly placed implants. For immediate-load implant cases, pairing these two technologies offers chairside milling of surgical guides so that the patient can be completely treated from implant placement to the seating of the restoration in one visit.

Dentists who have already implemented 3-D technology are seeing results, from more proficient diagnosis to more defined treatment planning and increased case acceptance. Speakers at the conference, such as i-CAT-owner Dr. Steven Guttenberg and GXCB-500 HD-owner Dr. John Flucke, will share their experiences on how CBCT is helping to change the face of dentistry across a wide range of procedures.

How is dental imaging broadening the scope of dental procedures for the general dentist as well as specialties?

Dr. Steven Guttenberg: With 5-D imaging, the dental profession is experiencing a real paradigm shift. Dental radiography has come a long way from the first X-ray taken by Wilhelm Roentgen of his wife’s hand in December of 1895. However, even with a panoramic radiograph, we are getting a 2-D representation and making diagnostic and treatment decisions for a three-dimensional object.

CBCT imaging gives dentists the opportunity to diagnose and plan treatment more efficiently. While I thought that I would use my i-CAT...
primarily just for implant procedures, I now use it for everything — taking out a tooth that is close to the nerve, exposing a tooth for orthodontics, for implants, TMJ treatment and trauma. Three-dimensional imaging touches all aspects of dentistry, from endodontics looking at teeth cross-sectionally, to orthodontics for non-surgical treatment or for integration for SureSmile robotic archwire technology.

When I think about the many ways that scans can be viewed and the scope of information that each scan provides (Fig. 2), the list of procedures that can benefit from this technology just keeps getting longer — I use it for extraction, pathology, orthognathic surgery, airway studies, dento-maxillofacial trauma, implants, bone grafts and evaluation of the paranasal sinuses.

**What type of dentist really needs 3-D imaging?**

Guttenberg: Being at the congress last year was an eye-opening experience. I witnessed how doctors of different specialties and general dentists use this innovation. For any practice to expand and improve, a dentist must embrace change. Physicist Thomas Kuhn, who first coined the term paradigm shift in 1962, noted that scientific advancement is not evolutionary, but is rather “a series of peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions. In those revolutions one conceptual world is replaced by another.”

Cone beam, to me, represents a revolutionary concept in imaging. Six or seven years ago, it was just being looked upon with curiosity, but now it is becoming the standard of care for dental radiography. Education in the possibilities that 3-D imaging brings to the practice is invaluable.

While 2-D still has its place in the dental practice, many patients need more for optimal care. Change is not easy, but it is necessary to change to move forward and to provide patient care in a better manner. Three-dimensional imaging is definitely a paradigm shift, letting dental professionals see the same information in an entirely different way. Nothing else really describes what is going on here.
What is your main message to dentists contemplating implementation of CBCT?
Flucke: I’m a general dentist. I use and believe in this technology. I have seen so many scans that have changed the course of treatment or provided the missing information for difficult diagnoses. By being a speaker at the conference, this is what I want people to know: Don’t be afraid to use 3-D imaging. Use it because it is the smart and the best thing to do. The end game is making the lives of our patients better and cone-beam 3-D imaging is the best way to do that.

Dr. Guttenberg offers a parting thought from George Bernard Shaw to encourage colleagues to educate themselves on 3-D technology to better understand its benefits to the dental practice.
“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”
For a full list of the topics and speakers that will be featured at the fourth International Congress on 3-D Dental Imaging and registration information, visit www.i-CAT3D.com.

Attend the fourth International Congress on 3-D Dental Imaging online

Don’t miss the opportunity to learn from the industry’s leading experts on 3-D imaging, planning and treatment. Learn how to incorporate, afford and use the technology in your practice today.

On June 25 and 26, the fourth International Congress on 3-D Dental Imaging hosted by Imaging Sciences and Gendex Dental Systems will be broadcast live online to provide those who cannot make it to La Jolla, Calif., an opportunity to learn about the benefits of 3-D imaging technology. Please see program details at www.i-cat3d.com.

Online participants will receive ADA-CERP C.E. credits. Registration for the two-day, live online broadcast is $149 and provides access to the archived recording for 30 days, to review at your convenience. Attendees require an online computer with audio capabilities. Please register at www.DTStudyClub.com under Online Courses. See you online!

Dr. John Flucke practices in Lee’s Summit, Mo.; he is a well-recognized expert and educator in dental technology.

Dr. Steven Guttenberg is an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, practicing in Washington, D.C., where he is director of the Washington Institute for Mouth, Face and Jaw Surgery.

About the interviewees

5 EVENINGS IN JULY - TO SUPPORT HAITIAN DENTISTS

A Smile For Haiti: Haitian Dentists Need Your Help!

JULY 12TH - 16TH
7:00 - 8:30 PM (EST) DAILY
live and interactive lectures
by prominent international speakers

Exactly six months after the earthquake devastation, Dental Tribune Study Club will be hosting daily 60-min lectures, 30-min Q&A. “A Smile for Haiti: Online Congress”. Participants will register for the entire pre-congress program (all 5 lectures for one donation). Participants have 30-day access to all archives, in case they cannot attend live event. All registration fees will be donated to Haitian relief, donated through the efforts of the ADA.

“The situation is terrible… When you live in a country with the lowest rate of dental treatment in the hemisphere, and you lose many dentists, it becomes a tragedy.”

Dr. Prophète, President of Haiti’s Dental Association

Fight oral cancer!

Prove to your patients just how committed you are to fighting this disease by signing up to be listed at www.oralcancerselfexam.com. This website shows patients how to do self-examinations for oral cancer.

Self-examination can help your patients to detect abnormalities or incipient oral cancer lesions early. Early detection in the fight against cancer is crucial and a primary benefit in encouraging your patients to engage in self-examinations.

Secondly, as dental patients become more familiar with their oral cavity, it will stimulate them to receive treatment much faster.

If dental professionals do not take the lead in the fight against oral cancer, who will? And in the eyes of our patients, they likely would not expect anyone else to do so — would you?