Aesthetically speaking
Dr Bob Khanna discusses the benefits of offering non-surgical facial aesthetic treatments dental

Every dentist has the ability to offer non-surgical aesthetics. A dentist’s underlying knowledge of the head and neck region, as well as the skills and dexterity required to be able to perform everyday dental tasks offers a solid grounding from which to build a career in this fast-paced industry.

As well as technical skills, I believe that dentists by nature have to be personable, and possess excellent communication skills to help alleviate any stress and anxiety within patients. This calming influence is hugely beneficial when working with patients who may not have had facial aesthetic treatments before, and may not be sure of exactly what to expect. After all, a calm patient is much easier to work with.

Desired v required
There are many benefits to performing facial aesthetics within a practice. For example, being able to combat pre-conceived ideas about what happens in a dentist’s chair. In the course of a normal day in surgery, dental phobia is a hurdle many practitioners have to overcome. However, I have found that patients are not as nervous when they are having a cosmetic procedure – despite being in a dental environment. I believe this is due to the ‘desired v required’ phenomenon.

When a patient is informed that they require a procedure, the concept is not a desirable one. If a patient desires aesthetic treatment, regardless of how long it will take, or how painful it is, people find strength to temper their anxiety in order to benefit from having the treatment.

Having an appealing facial aesthetic treatment in a dental environment also helps alleviate the general fear of visiting the dentist. They realise that the environment is not as scary as they may have imagined, and understand that they are safe in the hands of someone they trust. The environment is then associated with a pleasurable experience; their practitioner after all has provided them with something that they desired, so the fear of returning lessens considerably.

Boosting your client base
As well as helping patients face their phobias, I have found that I have also inherited a lot of dental clients from the facial aesthetics side of my business – one of the major benefits to offering the service. If your practice is set up well, patients should be able to get their hands on information about the cosmetic dentistry procedures you offer while in the practice for facial aesthetics treatments. I find patients who are interested in facial aesthetic surgery are generally more open to alternative forms of cosmetic procedures, and may be more likely to enquire about dental options. After all, nobody wants a rejuvenated face let down by a non-aesthetically pleasing smile.

A good earner
Financially, the facial aesthetic market, as a stand-alone modality, is highly profitable. Products such as Botox are defying the recession as consumers are choosing to opt for longer-lasting cosmetic treatment instead of short-lived expensive non-medical-based high street skincare routines. Also, a growing acceptance of such cosmetic procedures means that the demand for non-invasive procedures is increasing, and being able to offer patients such a service has the potential to increase revenue.

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About the author
Dr Bob Khanna is widely regarded as one of the world’s leading exemplars of dentistry and facial aesthetics. President and founder of non-profit organisation The International Academy for Advanced Facial Aesthetics (IAAFA), Dr Khanna heads the only UK organisation to combine medical and dental professionals. He is the appointed clinical tutor in facial aesthetics at the Royal College of Surgeons and has trained thousands of dentists and doctors through the Dr Bob Khanna Training Institute.