A dentist entered the homes of millions of television viewers when he performed life-changing mini-implant dental surgery on popular TV programme, *Ten Years Younger*, in which he helped to transform the image of 58-year-old, David Yule. Robert Dunn, principal of two practices in south Cheshire, took two hours 30 minutes to insert mini-implants into Mr Yule’s mouth, in an operation which was edited down to a mere three minutes for the programme.

Transforming smiles

When Cheshire dentist Dr Robert Dunn was asked to perform mini-implant surgery on Channel 4 programme, *Ten Years Younger*, he thought it would be a good opportunity to demonstrate the transformative power of dentistry to a wider audience.

Mr Dunn was approached to carry out oral surgery to improve the image of candidate, David Yule, on the programme, in which presenter, Myleene Klass, and her team attempted to turn the clock round for Mr Yule, so he could hopefully inject some romance back into his life. The aim was to change his overall looks from saggy to sassy and his facial appearance from grizzly into finely chiselled.

Mr Dunn got involved in the programme through his connection with leading dental implant manufacturer, Imtec – a 3M company – for whom he has presented seminars on mini-implants for several years.

He says: ‘The programme’s dental consultant/presenter, Dr Uchella Okoye, approached me through the company because she wanted David to have mini-implants inserted. She visited my surgery in September when I demonstrated a case to her. The actual recording was done in November.’

The challenge ahead

In the programme, which was aired on February 12, Mr Yule undergoes a complete image makeover, which includes extensive dental treatment, as well as facials, a wardrobe overhaul and general tips on skincare and grooming. As a result of not visiting the dentist for many years, as well as smoking for more than 43 years, no skincare routine and cycling in all weathers, Mr Yule’s overall appearance and oral health certainly left a lot to be desired. Also, his face was gaunt and dry, with worn and wrinkled skin, although he still had the body and energy of a much younger man.

To top it all, most of Mr Yule’s teeth were missing. He only had three teeth left intact, leaving him with a sunken face which had aged him over and above beyond his years. He was prescribed the following dental pro-
cures to restructure his teeth and transform his face: hygiene treatments, mini-implants and dentures.

Down to business

Firstly, Mr Dunn removed the Ten Years Younger participants three remaining teeth and prepared his mouth for his new cosmetic dentures, which were fixed with mini-implants screwed into his gums. These mini-implants are likely to last from five to 10 years if they are looked after properly.

Mr Dunn says: ‘The procedure was of the upper right canine, the lateral incisor and the central incisor, with the placement of collagen membranes and bone augmentation substitute to rebuild the pre-maxilla in this region, as the bone had been eroded away. This was necessary in order to allow the fitting of an immediate upper full denture. This was stabilised in David’s mouth by the placement of three mini-implants screwed into his gums on the upper left side. Without the implants the dentures would not have stayed in place.’

‘We wanted to change his over-all look from saggy to sassy, and his facial appearance from grizzly to chiselled’

Another willing candidate

Mr Dunn is also performing a dental operation for another forthcoming programme in the series of Ten Years Younger, which is being recorded in March, though no airing time has yet been confirmed. He says he is working on a similar case for the episode.

He says: ‘Dot, the lady on whom I am doing the surgery, had a denture put in when she was 17, about which she is very self-conscious, to the extent that she has told no-one, not even her husband. It took over half an hour to persuade her to go ahead with the mini-implant procedure.

‘For her treatment, I have made provision for five mini-implants to stabilise an acrylic denture replacing all the teeth in the upper arch, apart from the upper left lateral incisor and canine, as well as the upper right third molar.’

The mini-implant system consists of a miniature titanium implant, which acts like the root of a tooth and a retaining fixture that is incorporated into the base of the denture. The head of the implant is shaped like a ball and the retaining fixture acts like a socket that contains a rubber O-ring. The O-ring snaps over the ball when the denture is seated and holds the denture at a predetermined level of force. When seated, the denture gently rests on the gum tissue. The implant fixtures allow for micro-mobility while withstanding natural lifting forces. In 1997, Dr Sendax collaborated about his mini-implant theory with Imtec founder, Dr Ronald Bulard. The innovative system was introduced to US dentists at an implant conference in Florida in 1999.

A memorable experience

Mr Dunn says he enjoyed being on, Ten Years Younger, with the only downside being ‘the heat from the lights’. He says: ‘We had a good laugh, even though some of it felt a bit staged. I hope that in the next programme I will be able to talk a bit more about the great benefits to certain patients, of having mini-implants. The mini-implants have certainly helped David improve his quality of life.

‘People, who have dentures but no gums, have a very poor life-style, which can readily be transformed through the application of mini-implants.’

About the author

Mr Dunn, who runs the Cheshire Centre of Dental Excellence, in Bedford Street, Crewe, carried out his first implant surgery in 1972, which he says the patient still has in place. Originally trained in Manchester, he has practiced dentistry in Cheshire since 1970 and opened his second practice in Nantwich 18 months ago. For more information about Mr Dunn’s mini-implant procedures, call the surgery on 01270 256426 or visit www.robdunndentalcare.co.uk.