Lightening the load
Dr David Bloom and Dr Jay Padayachy of Senova Dental Studios discuss the benefits of high-tech equipment

1. Digital radiographs and portable x-ray heads such as the Nomad mean that all the convenience of instant radiographs along with the resultant reduction in radiation dosage are available. Not only are patients impressed by this technology, the advantages for the practice include time savings and also cost savings from not having to process the radiographs manually. Storage is no longer an issue and radiographs cannot get lost or misplaced or smudged. Many courses are also available to allow your team members to take the radiographs themselves. See Figs 1a and 1b.

2. Digital SLR camera. This is an essential piece of equipment on many fronts for diagnosis, patient communication and laboratory communication. A picture speaks a thousand words and never is this truer than with dental photography. Seeing a picture of their teeth on a 17-inch monitor aids co-diagnosis. This can also be extended to include intra-oral cameras as they also greatly aid patient communication and co-diagnosis. Intra-oral cameras are very useful when preparing teeth, for example when removing an old amalgam filling to show any internal fracture lines that are present, so that this can be documented. See fig 2.

3. Air abrasion unit. There are many available and each have their pros and cons. However, as a treatment modality, this is considerably under utilised and has many advantages ranging from minimal preparation to better bond strengths for adhesive dentistry. While some of these advantages can be achieved through a lower-tech, intra-oral sandblaster, this will not actually cut tooth tissue which air abrasion does. It can do this very conservatively and often without the need for local anaesthetic. With the advent of hydro abrasion, the mess often associated with this technology is also greatly reduced. See fig 5.

4. Dental Lasers have come down in price considerably over the last six years resulting in soft tissue diode lasers at affordable prices. They now cover a variety of procedures ranging from cosmetic

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Fig. 1a: Digital x-ray sensor
Fig. 1b: Portable x-ray unit
Fig. 2: SLR and intra oral camera
Fig. 3: Intra-oral camera
Fig. 4: Patient-entertainment system
Fig. 5: Air abrasion unit
gingival re-contouring to treating periodontal pockets and adjunctive to endodontics therapy and exposure of implant fixtures. The modern ones are very portable and some are even cordless so that they can be used in multiple rooms. Hard-tissue lasers are also useful, but at this time are considerably more expensive. See Fig 5.

6. Velscope. An amazing piece of equipment for the early detection of oral cancer. While the cost of this screening can pay for the machine, patients are also very appreciative of having this reassurance and with the correct marketing, the costs of the machine can quickly be recouped via goodwill. See Dental Tribune Vol 2, Issue 26 and Fig 6.

7. Wand. This is a computerized local anaesthetic delivery system that allows slow and painless anaesthetics. It is a modern replacement for syringes which have barely changed in design since 1853. Pain from palatal infiltrations will be a thing of the past and a single point of infiltration can anaesthetise upper three to three. As the needle can be held with a pen grip, there is minimal risk of deflection of the needle when giving an inferior dental block and hence the chances of failure are vastly reduced.

8. Magnification. A real eye opener once you start using it, especially when used in conjunction with a battery light – see Fig 8. It’s best to start with relatively low power of 2.5 times loupe. This can go up to times 4.5 with higher powered loupe or even higher with microscopes. Ensure your loupe are professionally measured to fit yourself for visual acuity. The magna vu is a videoscope which can be used to record procedures for patient education. It can be used live to work off indirect vision from a flat screen TV or even to feed procedures to a lecture room. It also can act as a magnification device of up to x 25 optical x 50 digital. See Figs 8a and 8b.

9. Power whitening lamp – such as ZOOM Advanced Power. While some older studies maintain that the light does little but provide marketing support for the bleaching procedure, newer studies dispute this and our experience is that power whitening certainly kick starts the procedure and gives patients the motivation to continue with home trays that they might otherwise be reluctant to wear.

10. Collardam. Although this is not high-tech in price, the crystal fibre technology is high-tech and allows your patient to stay dry around the neck area even with the large amounts of water and spray are created associated with restorative dentistry and even ultrasonic scalers. If you think your patients do not get wet, just ask them. See Fig 10.

The products mentioned in this article are the ones used on a daily basis by the authors and other than Collardam, for which they are company directors, they receive no financial incentives for their use or promotion.
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Henry Schein, the UK’s leading supplier of products and services to the dental team are pleased to announce the re-organisation of their senior management team.

Simon Gambold, who has been part of the Henry Schein team for more than 14 years, and played an important role in the acquisition of Minerva Dental in 2008, now assumes the role of ‘Managing Director’. Simon will continue to work as part of the British Dental Trade Association, creating and develop key relationships throughout the dental industry and profession.

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