A good impression

Luke Barnett talks about making the most of the latest implant technology and the skills of your laboratory

There are numerous different implant systems with largely the same success levels. Your choice should be determined by the clinical parameters of the case and the patient’s precise requirements rather than a blanket preference.

Choosing a reputable brand – Nobel, 3I, Straumann, Ankylos, BioHorizons, Astra tech, to name a few – ensures that you are working with durable, quality materials designed with a high standard of craftsmanship and the right technical backup.

Zirconium is becoming increasingly popular as an implant material, but its integrity can be compromised by the way it is handled, for example, using the right diamond for adjustments and avoiding rapid or extreme changes in temperature during manufacture. It’s vital to follow the manufacturer’s instructions to ensure a durable outcome and that technicians use great care when designing abutments and substructures. I would however strongly recommend zirconium for use in the aesthetic zone.

Delivering results

Outside the aesthetic zone, and when space permits, titanium is perfectly satisfactory with the most recent brands being gold plated to enhance aesthetics. All ceramic systems, whether zirconium or pressed ceramics etc, will deliver excellent aesthetic results so long as the materials limitations are fully appreciated.

The key to success and good relations is communication. Encourage the use of a tissue model to replicate the gum to aid in proper design of restorations and emergence profiles and give precise, detailed instructions for the handling of contacts and occlusal loading. These are critical to the success of the final outcome, take face bow records where possible to help to minimise functional adjustments. No dentist likes to grind porcelain and no technician likes to hear of his or her work being adjusted. Keeping the lines of communication open and offering accurate information saves misunderstandings on both sides and eliminates the need for unnecessary modifications or for work to be repeated.

Today’s patients have high expectations for their implants, and aesthetics must now be matched by the restoration of natural function. With the support of Cad/Cam technology and the extensive research, which underpins today’s implant systems, meeting these expectations has become the norm.