The bigger picture

Dr Koray Feran looks at how restorative dentistry has progressed in the past few years and compares some of the materials on the market

Over the past five years or so I have noticed a gradual, but distinct consensus across the disciplines, so that the procedures we are carrying out are backed up with stronger evidence. We seem to have developed a much better understanding and agreement of the treatments we carry out for our patients. Of course, there are still gaps, but we are all heading in the right direction.

**Behind the scenes**

I have great admiration for the unseen supporters of our profession – is still a subject for intense debate.

I hope that the problems are ironed out and we can keep zirconia. However, some very experienced practitioners around the world are finding a greater cumulative failure rate of zirconia-based restorations as years go by, so this might be one technology where I would recommend not putting all of your eggs in one basket just yet.

**How patients benefit**

One would hope that through better knowledge and acquisition of more advanced skills, more of us are in a position to assist our patients with the problems they face. The use of stronger aesthetic materials that bond better to teeth will hopefully mean less frequent revision being necessary during the patient’s lifetime and greater reliability of our treatment. However, again it must be stressed that this will only occur if the clinical techniques and control with which these materials are used is of a high standard.

As far as one particular item is concerned, the profession has put a lot of faith in zirconia and especially CAD/CAM manufactured zirconia restorations. The material itself is pretty tough and easily the most durable ceramic we have at our disposal; however, the problems experienced with adhesion of veneering porcelain and cement to this material – as well as its degradation over time when exposed to the punishing oral environment – is still a subject for intensive debate.

**The greatest advances**

I would have to say that the greatest advances have been seen in postgraduate education that are continually striving to create better materials and more efficient equipment. This requires an intricate knowledge of chemistry, biology, electronics and material science.

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