A new solution

If there is a lack of orthodontic specialists in your area, Dr Andrew McCance suggests that you read on...

The demand for cosmetic dental treatments is growing at an exponential rate, and it is the duty of dentists to meet this demand. More and more patients are beginning to appreciate the importance of a nice smile, but whether they can get the results they need or not depends on many factors – not least of which being geography.

There is a distinct lack of specialists for referral in some areas of the country, leading to much longer waiting times. That this situation existed in the 21st century is something of an indictment. In these areas, the long waiting times for an appointment and the distance required to travel is the very antithesis of convenience. The upshot of this is that patients in areas where there is a shortage of specialists will not have to undertake an odyssey before they can receive minor pre-restorative and mild crowding treatment.

Not so simple

Imagine for a moment that you wanted restorative treatment, to build your confidence and provide a boost to your quality of life. How would you feel if, having taken the first step, you now had to wait perhaps several weeks or even longer, to see an orthodontist because there was a shortage of specialists in your local area? Now imagine how you would feel when, having waited for your appointment, and/or travelled a considerable distance, it turned out that the orthodontic work was very minor indeed. Wouldn't you ask yourself why your dentist couldn't provide even this simple procedure?

Of course, patients do not understand the finer points of dentistry, or the huge amount of education and skill that goes into even the most straightforward treatment. What they do understand, in cases like the one above, is that they have not received the service they expect. If they are willing to pay for treatment, their dentists should be willing to provide as comprehensive a treatment list as possible.

A problem solved

Thanks to a wealth of in-depth research and many years of development, there are now solutions to this problem. General Dental Practitioners can now, with the aid of state of the art systems, offer orthodontic treatments so that patients in areas where there is a shortage of specialists will not have to undertake an odyssey before they can receive minor pre-restorative and mild crowding treatment.

‘How pleased would you be, emerging from the practice with a brand new smile?’

New clear-brace systems are not only wire and metal free, they are easy to fit and remove, and cost-effective, too. Although more complex orthodontic procedures may still need to be referred to experienced specialists, the facility of the clear brace to be combined with more traditional forms of treatment makes it very flexible, so you can refer fewer patients. The upshot of this is that you can develop a relationship with many of your patients, and oversee their treatment from beginning to end.

With this in mind, imagine you are this patient. You have decided to undergo cosmetic dental treatment, and your local dentist is able to carry out every stage of the process. How pleased would you be, emerging from the practice with a brand new smile, having experienced not only a high standard of convenience but also with the knowledge that your dentist has made the effort to meet your every need?

Customer service first

By putting yourself in the place of a cosmetic dentistry patient, you can see exactly why the demand for a better system has led to the development of clear-brace systems. Orthodontists still have a place of course, when more complex procedures are necessary. However, for minor treatments it is becoming more important, in the interests of competitiveness and plain customer service, for GDPs to offer more of a ‘total’ service – especially in those parts of the country where there is a shortage of specialists.

For more information on the Clearstep solution, call 01342 537810 or email info@clearstep.co.uk

About the author

Dr Andrew McCance has gained a wealth of experience in multi-disciplinary dentistry, and has held several distinguished positions including senior house dental surgeon at St George’s Hospital, London, and then the post of senior lecturer at Great Ormond Street. He continued to develop his expertise culminating in a PhD at University College London. In the mid 1990s, Dr McCance began to develop the Clearstep brace, based on the demands of the 4,000 patients treated annually in his specialist practices. He is currently taking his Clearstep vision to a world-wide audience.

More patients are beginning to appreciate the importance of a nice smile.

Since qualifying in dentistry from Glasgow University, Dr Andrew McCance has gained a wealth of experience in multi-disciplinary practices. He has held several distinguished positions including senior house dental surgeon at St George’s Hospital, Tooting, and then the post of senior lecturer at Great Ormond Street. He continued to develop his expertise culminating in a PhD at University College London. In the mid 1990s, Dr McCance began to develop the Clearstep brace, based on the demands of the 4,000 patients treated annually in his specialist practices. He is currently taking his Clearstep vision to a world-wide audience.

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A middle way

‘Everything in moderation’ would seem an excellent maxim by which to govern our lives. Great thinkers including Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, Muhammad and the Dalai Lama have preached the value of ‘The Middle Way’ or a middle path. So, what values constitute ‘moderation’? Consider the following: grace, balance between extremes (say between asceticism and carousal desire), righteousness, proper conduct, self-control, restraint, non-gluttony, modesty, non-authoritarian, humanity, quietness, temperance: nothing wrong with any of those qualities – but on the other hand, nothing terribly exciting either.

Not far enough

Confucius said that going too far was as bad as not going far enough. If we don’t test our abilities to some degree beyond that which is normal, comfortable or moderate, we run the risk of setting overly constricive limits to ourselves and our societies on our ability to be imaginative, creative or innovative. Perhaps this ability is what enabled America to become the world’s most powerful state, and conversely was one of the most potent causes of the failure of Communism.

Exercising dietary control

An area where moderation is considered virtuous is dietary control. Eric Schlosser, in Fast Food Nation says that rather than indulging in junk food, our diet should be limited in scope, size, production, distribution, selection and profitability. Pigging out is considered to be very bad, indeed, an extreme type of human conduct, whereas careful, sensible and controlled dieting is considered to be moderate and therefore good. But what happens when we become calorie-counting zealots, eating nothing bad? In such a situation we become extremely self-controlling, which is not moderate at all!

Earning enough money

As a dentist, my earnings by comparison to City business-folk are very moderate. On the other hand, the same earnings by comparison to your average citizen of Bangladesh or Ethiopia or Chad are outrageously excessive. Do I need all that excess?

Extremism – or not?

At the other end of the spectrum from moderation lies extremism. One of the core characteristics underpinning an open modern society is that it sets no preconceived parameters on our ability to enhance and cultivate our most humane aspirations. Mahatma Gandhi advocated non-violence, demanded that the Indian nation accept his creed, and was prepared to starve himself to death to achieve his objectives, which seems a rather extreme measure in itself. Nelson Mandela, faced the death penalty because of his belief that, when circumstances demanded it, no extreme measure was too extreme to defeat a regime that practised Apartheid.

Should we change?

Can we change to a more moderate course in the way we live our everyday lives? Is it desirable, much less necessary? Surely, just as there are pernicious, damaging and negative forms, there are also excellent forms of excess — such as when you test and expand the limits of your aptitudes and abilities, of your courage and social conscience. So everything in moderation might not always be good advice.

Do you think concern with moderation is important, or is it an outmoded concept? Email jury@dentaltribuneuk.com and let us have your views.