A new solution

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

T he 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.

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 557910 or email info@clearstep.co.uk.

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 in your local area? Now imagine how you would feel when, having waited 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 upside of this is that you can develop a relationship with many of your patients, and oversee their treatment from beginning to end.

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Moderation

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 careless desire), righteousness, proper conduct, self-control, restraint, non-gluttony, modesty, non-authoritarian, humility, 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 constrictive 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 form 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 had? 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-people 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 outdated concept? Email jury@dentaltribuneuk.com and let us have your views.