I n the 1980s, implant therapy was function driven, while in the 1990s the main focus was on the prosthetic element. Today implant therapy is driven by oral health, function and aesthetics. There are many factors to consider when seeing a patient, with treatment planning the key to success of treatment. Bone and soft tissue considerations, respecting the biology and translating the initial treatment plan will ultimately decide whether the treatment is deemed a success or failure.

It is therefore important to deliver not only a long-term solution, but also a highly aesthetic result. After completing implant training, the next hurdle is treating patients in your own practice. It is very important to treat patients either during or at the end of training or straight afterwards to maintain the confidence and knowledge gained during the course. I have seen many surgeons on my refreshers course due to this very reason and a majority of them have not carried out any implant treatment following their training.

Using a mentor

The use of a mentor is a very popular way to translate the therapy of implants into a real practical notion. Mentors are highly experienced surgeons in your local area and can be found either through friends or through implant companies who produce mentor lists in the UK.

Following my own training in implants I was supervised during my initial cases and although I performed the treatment, having a mentor to guide me increased my knowledge and confidence.

As a listed mentor, I have trained many surgeons in the UK. The service I provide can range from simple phone advice, radiographic evaluation, treatment planning or dealing with complications. Mentees are then welcome to either bring patients to my clinic or for me to travel with my team to their clinics. This allows the surgeon to perform the operation with confidence under supervision, with one-to-one practical training.

Continuing professional development

As the level of skill and knowledge increases, new challenges and cases will present themselves early on in implant therapy. In order to meet these challenges, it is important to continue learning. Implant therapy is continually evolving following some excellent research undertaken by some clinical teams across the world. The knowledge gained on specific courses will help to offer different solutions to the patients and therefore give a more comprehensive treatment plan.

For further information, call 01895 430 650, email info.uk@nobelbiocare.com or visit www.nobelbiocare.com.

About the author

Dr Riz Syed qualified at the Royal London Hospital in 1999 and runs a referral clinic in Basingstoke and Walton-on-Thames, and was one of the first surgeons in the country to use NobelGuide. He is a mentor for Nobel Biocare, helping to train UK implant surgeons. Regularly consulted for complex treatment planning cases, Dr Syed lectures on guided implant surgery. He is a member of the Association of Dental Implantology, the International Congress of Oral Implantologists and Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.

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