Show patients the way to brush

Dental Tribune highlights an innovative motivational device developed by accident!

One of the main problems for dental professionals is instructing their patients in the right oral health routine. It isn’t easy to be sure patients are brushing effectively, and it is hard for patients to know if they are cleaning all the areas of the mouth effectively.

There has been a gap in oral health education aids that can really show the patients what they need to be doing for optimal oral health. Mouth models are good for explanation, but the patient can’t really get a feel for what they are doing in their own mouth. What is really needed is a way to visually represent what patients are doing that can be used as a motivational tool by the dental team and be clear for patients. This is where Oralinsights comes in.

Oralinsights is a portable interactive system that allows a dental professional and patient to view the patient’s tooth brushing in real-time 3D. Consisting of a computer, tracking system, headset, measurement probe and software, Oralinsights has been developed to be a modern and motivating system which really helps to correct and educate patients.

Using the system in practice is extremely easy. The patient wears a lightweight headset. The dental professional then takes a 3D image of the patient’s mouth and saves it to the system. The patient then brushes their teeth as normal, while the system tracks the position and motion of the brushing action to create a mouth map. This map will highlight the areas that have been less well brushed, as well as the length of time in any particular area, and generates a report. Using the interactive on-screen facility, the patient is then shown, while brushing, how to improve their technique and where they need to concentrate their efforts. It has been shown that more than 50 per cent more plaque is removed from normal brushing in problem areas after only one session with Oralinsights. It is very time efficient too, as each session lasts for approximately 10 minutes.

The benefits for patients include:

■ An insight into how well they brush their teeth
■ Showing exactly where the brush goes and for how long
■ Help to change their brushing technique for the better
■ Patients are able to make adjustments in technique by watching the screen as they brush in real time 3D
■ Teaches children the best way to brush before they acquire any bad habits
■ Children find it easy and enjoyable to learn from the interactive screen and by ‘doing it for themselves’

Benefits for practices include:

■ A unique and exciting product that is proven to be popular and effective with both adults and children alike
■ An additional benefit to patients with which to successfully market your practice
■ An opportunity to improve levels of preventative care
■ Fewer problems allows greater time for more patients or

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Neil Sanderson, marketing manager at PracticeWorks who developed the product, spoke to Dental Tribune about the launch of Oralinsights. He said: “Oralinsights has been three years in development, and falls in the category of accidentally being discovered as being useful to a wider audience.

“It was originally developed as an internal device for Unilever to test how well their toothbrushes and toothpaste worked. As the device was developed, it became apparent that it could have a viable place in the field of patient motivation and establishment of a correct oral health regime.

“Unilever then approached us and asked us to take it to market.”

Oralinsights has been tested in the UK and US as well as in Scandinavia. Trials have shown the device to be effective in both increasing the brushing time for patients, reducing plaque levels and changing behaviour in patients. The feedback PracticeWorks has received has also been excellent, according to Neil.

“Oralinsights was extremely well received at the recent British Society of Dental Hygienists and Therapists Annual conference and exhibition. Delegates were very keen to hear more about it and also how they could implement it into their appointments.”

Oralinsights sees its full UK professional launch at this year’s BDTA Dental Showcase exhibition. Visitors to the Birmingham event will be able to see the device demonstrated as well as take advantage of some very special show offers to introduce Oralinsights into their practice.

For more details, visit Stand J05 at Showcase (November 12-14th, 2009), call 0800 169 9692 or go to www.practiceworks.co.uk.