From straightforward to complex cases

The new NimrodAligner and why it can be the ultimate orthodontic removable aligning system

By Nimrod Tal & Lauren Flannery

As a dental practitioner, helping your patient look to improve their smile by undergoing orthodontic treatment with one of the many aligning systems available can be a very daunting decision to make when it comes to choosing the right system. Whatever their lifestyle, the attributes most commonly sought after are typically comfort, discreetness and for the treatment time to be as speedy as possible. Depending on the case, it can sometimes be quite difficult to achieve all of these aims within one single aligning system, as each is designed to achieve very specific and individual movements, and not all are designed to do this with the whole arch.

As an orthodontic laboratory, we are introduced to hundreds of very individual cases on a weekly basis, where more often than not patients will have specified that the above attributes are key to their decision making process when we assess for the appliances that will be best suited to their particular case. After having been faced so regularly with the task of assisting our clients to make the decision that will benefit their patients as much as aspects as they can, we had a thought — what if the advantages of each of these aligning systems were combined, so that we can, as far as possible, ensure that they are not as often requested as more popular removable aligners? The NimrodAligner has the fixed brackets arch wires biomechanics incorporated within the removable appliance so clinical time is extremely minimal. The teeth and gums can also be cleaned to the proper standard and at only 2.5 mm in thickness (Fig. 5) — as opposed to the standard 3 to 3.5 mm thickness of fixed brackets — so the overall feel is very anatomically friendly.

Clear Aligners are the most anatomically friendly appliances on the market today, and are mostly popular because of just how discreet they are. Despite these advantages, the force and pressure induced during the initial days of wear can be very painful. Although a sign that they are working as they should, the aligners tend to become passive as time passes and are typically only at their most active in just the first seven days. On the other hand, the NimrodAligner, MT1 wires ensure that the pressure is gentle, yet provide continuous support. Multiple Clear Aligner trays can also become very tedious for both patient and dentist, particularly when frequent appointments are necessary and stages of interproximal reduction (IPR) have to be carried out. IPR can be a huge factor in the progress of Clear Aligners as each aligner is made to incorporate the necessary IPR after each stage and the fit of following trays will be affected if not enough has been done. This is not a problem for the NimrodAligner as it will not affect the fit of the appliance if there has been insufficient IPR on the previous appointment. The patient can continue to wear it and IPR can be completed where necessary on the next appointment.

Similarly, spring aligners can also continue to be worn and fit correctly in between appointments if not enough IPR has been done previously, however they’re widely known for limited movement to just four incisions. It may be good for labial/lingual movement using the ‘squeeze’ effect, and some rotation, but Clear Aligners can often be required to finish.
In some instances, a separate expansion appliance may be required prior to treatment, which essentially boosts costs and adds time onto treatment overall. We have reduced this concern by offering this stage for such cases within the NimrodAligner singularly. The arch can gain molar width by pre-setting the molars in a wider position when it comes to making the movements on our 3-D system, and the connecting bar can act as a spring thanks to its flexibility. The rest of the teeth will continue to be aligned during this process.

In more complex cases however whereby a separate expansion appliance is unavoidable, two Nimrod-Aligners will be provided. The caps will not fit on the teeth that are blocked in otherwise, so the initial appliance will create space for the blocked teeth. Once they have been exposed, the second appliance would be provided to sit on all of the teeth.

During our research and production stages, we aimed to create the ultimate orthodontic removable aligning system that could potentially be the answer to the prayers of dentists and patients alike. We have reduced clinical time dramatically by removing the time-consuming hassle of fitting appliances such as fixed brackets by providing a bespoke pre-aligned appliance that simply needs to be placed on the teeth. We have taken into consideration the fact that multiple appliances can sometimes be necessary to achieve the desired result, and have eliminated the need for this by designing the Nimrod-Aligner in a way that allows the entire arch to move in any direction. In case expansion is also required, we have this incorporated (Fig. 1).

We have adapted the force and pressure of the movement to be effective for just sixteen hours a day, allowing the patients to remove the appliance for an entire eight hour working day if they wish, to grant the roots a sufficient amount of time to recover. By combining all of the positive aspects of the orthodontic appliances mentioned above, the Nimrod-Aligner can be suitable for most cases from straightforward to complex.

Figs. 6–9: By combining all of the positive aspects of different orthodontic appliances, the NimrodAligner can be suitable for most cases from straightforward to complex.
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“We will be able to treat pretty much everything in the future”

An interview with Dr Graham Gardner, UK, President of the European Aligner Society

The European Aligner Society is an international organisation established in 2013 that aims to promote education and research in aligner therapy. Founded in South Africa and with 22 years of clinical experience, Dr Graham Gardner has been running his own private practices in the UK since 2008. In an interview with Dental Tribune, the EAS President shares his ideas and views about the importance of aligners in orthodontics and about the EAS, which he believes will become the society for aligner therapy.

Dental Tribune: Dr Gardner, you have been working with aligners for more than a decade now. What convinced you initially of this treatment method and what are the main advantages in your experience?

Dr Graham Gardner: From the beginning of my career in the early 1990s, a time when ceramic brackets and lingual braces became available, I was certainly aware of the fact that aesthetic appliances were going to be the future of orthodontics.

In 2001, I was fortunate to attend a certification course for Invisalign, which was truly a watershed moment in my orthodontic career because I saw the value and potential of aligner therapy for both dental professionals and patients. In my opinion, aligner therapy opened the door for a huge cohort of patients who would not have considered orthodontic therapy in the past.

Aligner therapy has come of age and is now a genuine appliance system with which we can treat the majority of malocclusions. At the moment, however, aligner therapy is still a fairly expensive form of orthodontics. Thus, I hope that improvements in materials and 3-D printing will render manufacture and the product itself more cost-effective. For example, 3-D printers could allow individual practices to print their own aligners in the future.

Overall, with technological advancements and increasing patient acceptance, we will be able to treat pretty much everything in the future in my view.

How have developments in the European and the overseas market differed?

Dentistry as a profession is very conservative and dentists in the US, for example, are perhaps a bit more progressive. However, with regard to aligners, I no longer rely on a great difference between Europe and America. The movement is global and I suspect the advancements we are now seeing in Europe will match those in America and Asia, where aligner therapy is also very popular. There are always regional differences, also partly related to legal restrictions, but the trend towards aligner therapy is a global phenomenon.

The European Aligner Society (EAS) is an independent organisation that patients and dental professionals can consult for guidelines. Research is our third column, which is currently lagging behind. Eventually, we hope to have our own aligner journal or magazine and grant annual awards for excellence in aligner therapy.

Can dental professionals look forward to another EAS congress next year?

Based on the success of the inaugural event over the past weekend, we definitely see the congress to become a regular event in the calendar. While we are planning to hold the EAS congress every two years, we will be organising smaller regional forums on a continuous basis throughout every year.

Thank you very much for the interview.

“...aligner therapy opened the door for a huge cohort of patients who would not have considered orthodontic therapy in the past...”
Individuals play the game, but teams win championships

What it takes to build the ultimate practice unit

By Lina Craven, UK

It is said that all teams are groups, but not all groups are teams. What separates the two is interdependence. A true team is focused on a common purpose; team members support one another and enhance each other’s work and contribution. Andrew Carnegie captured this accurately when he said, “Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

I know that achieving the ultimate team is possible, because when I was a dental nurse many years ago in America, I was part of an ultimate team. What made us great was our leader, Dr. Derrick Tagawa. He and his partner had a very clear vision and they knew exactly what was needed from each one of us to ensure the practice achieved its desired results. In turn, each one of us knew that every challenge we faced was an opportunity for personal, professional and practice growth.

Practices with a motivated, focused and empowered team produce excellent results; consequently, patient satisfaction is high and practitioners realise increased financial rewards. Achieving such a team is not pie in the sky but it does require complete commitment from the whole team. Based on my own experience of being a part of a high-performing team and my observations as a consultant to practices, here are my key principles for the creation of an ultimate team.

Do not confuse the boss with being a leader. Leaders set the tone for the practice. They lead by positive example. Successful teamwork starts at the top with leaders who provide strategic vision and establish team goals. Effective leaders clearly define their vision and share it with their team to establish a common purpose.

Any successful relationship can only survive if values are shared, believed and agreed upon, values like honesty, respect, integrity and commitment to each other, commitment to the practice success. Shared values help to build an effective team and to establish its culture, conduct, rules and policies. The key is to ensure the entire team agrees on the same values and is prepared to work by them. According to the world’s finest flight demonstration team (the Blue Angels, US Navy), “without shared values, peak performance isn’t possible.”

Each team member, from the leader to the cleaner, must learn to communicate clearly and effectively. Successful relationships are built on positive, honest and open feedback. Is information shared openly and honestly in your team? Does gossip or negative chatter exist in your practice? Team members must learn to address concerns, deal with conflict and accept responsibility for the success of other team members. When conflict occurs, it must be dealt with honestly, directly and openly as soon as possible and in line with the team’s adopted values. Foster positive attitudes and creative thinking—attitudes which can either make or break the team dynamics, so there is no place for negative people. Do all your team members have clear and up-to-date job descriptions? Are they all qualified to undertake their roles? Are there written procedures for every area of the practice? Often, team members say they are not sure who is responsible for something, or they do not have a job description, or they were promised something but have not yet received any owing to the practice being too busy. Staff turnover results from clear and well-defined roles and practice procedures and a shared understanding of each other’s roles. Cross-training increases efficiency and makes each person more productive and valuable to the team.

Each team member is a cog in the practice’s wheel of success. However, many are often underutilised to utilise their or her full potential. Empowerment results from clearly defined roles and practice procedures, and a shared understanding of each other’s roles. Cross-training increases efficiency and thus become bored or complacent. Dr. Tagawa believed in providing the best training for his staff. He also recognised that he may lose some individuals who desired greater career progression than the practice could offer. He knew nevertheless that those who remained would perform at their peak and more than justify his investment.

Every morning in Dr. Tagawa’s practice as part of our commitment to the team, we would meet 10 minutes prior to the start of the day to prepare for the show. The head receptionist had a simple but effective system for updating us with vital information, including how many patients we would be seeing, special recognitions (like patients’ birthdays), identifying difficult patients, and thus become bored or complacent. Dr. Tagawa believed in providing the best training for his staff. He also recognised that he may lose some individuals who desired greater career progression than the practice could offer. He knew nevertheless that those who remained would perform at their peak and more than justify his investment.

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Blue Angels, US Navy

“Successful leaders embrace the power of teamwork by tapping into the innate strengths each person brings to the table.”

Walt Disney once famously said, “You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful place in the world, but it requires people to make the dream a reality.” Imagine a girl visiting Disney World hoping to see Cinderella, but when she encounters her, Cinderella is chewing gum and has a can’t-do, won’t-do attitude. Is Cinderella playing her role? It takes the right attitude and focused commitment from every member of the team to turn the vision into a reality. When that patient your practice dreads is due to arrive, how do you all respond? With “I will not take any nonsense from this patient today!” or “I’ll show her who’s the boss?” When we choose the right attitude and chose to stay true to our purpose, we will help others to do the same. A sincere word of praise. They’re absolutely free and worth a fortune.”

Building the ultimate team does represent a challenge, but once achieved it is hugely rewarding. There is no point implementing one principle in isolation. It is like baking a cake without the eggs.
Conservative smile design for the general dentist

By Dr Ramzi Chayah, Lebanon

Abstract

This article discusses the advantages of short-term anterior tooth alignment using the Inman Aligner system, particularly for general dentists. This article will give a brief description of the Inman Aligner appliance and its use in short-term orthodontics, and it will answer major questions that the general dentist should ask himself or herself during the treatment planning process. In support of this treatment modality, three case scenarios for general dentists will be given as examples.

Introduction

General dentists face the daily challenge of performing instant veneers for patients with misaligned anterior teeth who refuse orthodontic treatment, many of whom regard fixed orthodontic treatment as too long a commitment for achieving their desired aesthetic results. In today’s fast-paced life, some patients are not prepared to wait or to go through lengthy treatments. One of the greatest benefits of short-term anterior alignment is that many people who would refuse comprehensive orthodontic treatment may accept short-term removable alignment techniques such as the Inman Aligner system.

The Inman Aligner is a simple removable appliance, a modification of the removable spring retainer. It uses super-elastic NiTi springs to apply highly efficient light and consistent forces on both the labial and lingual surfaces of the anterior teeth (Figs. 1 & 2). The appliance is fabricated on a cast on which, based on a surgical model, the anterior teeth needing correction have been removed and reset in the ideal position in wax on the working cast. When the patient wears the appliance, the built-in forces generated by the spring coils will correct the misaligned anterior teeth (Fig. 3).

What distinguishes the Inman Aligner appliance from other short-term orthodontic systems such as Invisalign (Align Technology) and Six Month Smiles is its low cost, low risk and short learning curve for general practitioners. Only one appliance is used from the start to the end of the treatment. Sometimes, several clear aligners may be used to de-rotate resistant canines. The system is well received by patients because it is fast and relatively cheap. It also accommodates today’s active lifestyle. Usually, most cases take from six to 16 weeks. Patients can take the appliance out during meals or work meetings.

As with any other treatment technique, the Inman Aligner has its limitations. Hence, case selection is imperative, as the Inman Aligner is not suitable for posterior orthodontic treatment or Class II or III treatment. Only certain types of movements are possible and some patients will still need conventional orthodontic treatment or indirect restorations. Certain criteria should be met before treatment proceeds. At consultation, other orthodontic alternatives should be offered. The dentist must quote for the long-term retention maintenance and should look for any skeletal discrepancies. Compromises must be signed off.

Fig. 1: Inman Aligner appliance.—Fig. 2: Illustration of the Inman Aligner showing the appliance components.—Fig. 3: Inman Aligner appliance in the mouth. Case 1.—Fig. 4: Frontal view with the teeth in occlusion before treatment.—Fig. 5: Frontal view with slightly open bite showing the status of the teeth before treatment.—Fig. 6: Frontal view with the teeth in occlusion after alignment and bleaching.—Fig. 7: Close-up frontal view of the maxillary teeth after ABB.—Fig. 8: Right side view of the maxillary teeth before ABB.—Fig. 9: Right side view of the maxillary teeth after ABB.—Fig. 10: Left side view of the maxillary teeth before ABB.—Fig. 11: Left side view of the maxillary teeth after alignment and bleaching.—Fig. 12: Full face before treatment.—Fig. 13: Full face after treatment.—Fig. 14: Frontal view showing the patient’s natural smile before treatment.—Fig. 15: Frontal view showing the patient’s natural smile after treatment.—Fig. 16: Full face showing the patient’s natural smile before treatment.—Fig. 17: Full face showing the patient’s natural smile after treatment.—Fig. 18: Occlusal view showing the maxillary arch before treatment.—Fig. 19: Occlusal view showing the maxillary arch after treatment.
fixed without orthodontic treatment in a very short period? In order for the general dentist to answer this question, he or she should first establish whether the patient does not wish to pursue orthodontic treatment because of the time commitment and cost. Would he or she refuse short-term anterior tooth alignment? Would the occlusion be improved even through a Class I molar or Class I canine relationship may not be achieved? Patients may prefer short-term alignment techniques because of the shorter treatment time and the lower cost.

Case 1

The first case presented is a good example of a scenario relevant to the question above. The patient was a young woman at college who presented at my office requesting a full smile makeover of twenty veneers, she desired a “Hollywood smile” as expressed in her own words. Her complaint was the extracted maxillary right and left central incisors, the incisal edge wear on the maxillary central incisors and mandibular anterior teeth, the puny size of the maxillary and mandibular canines, and the yellow colour of her teeth overall (Figs. 4 & 5). It could be argued that it would be highly unethical to prepare the sound enamel, transforming her 16 maxillary teeth into stumps for the rest of her life, especially at this young age. After long discussion and explanation of the disadvantages of the shortcut route of preparing her teeth for ceramic veneers, this option was excluded. Several other options were available and discussed with her, but because she wanted a smile enhancement in a short period of time, conventional fixed orthodontic treatment was also excluded. After checking her bite, it was observed that there was an insufficient interocclusal space to shift the maxillary central incisors forwards without opening the bite. However, the patient accepted use of the Inman Aligner system owing to its flexibility in that the wearer is able to remove the appliance for several hours a day and because of its short treatment time. The maxillary left central incisor would have been aggressively prepared had it been treated restoratively. By using a simple anterior alignment technique, the treatment took only eight weeks to straighten the teeth and a great deal of sound enamel tissue was preserved by conservatively resolving the unattractive appearance of the maxillary teeth (Figs. 22 & 23).

The treatment plan was to follow the ABB protocol (alignment, bleaching and bonding). This concept still demonstrates the necessity of aligning the incisal edges (Fig. 25). The patient initially requested instant veneers to resolve his smile problem, but after mocking up the design directly in his mouth, he was discouraged from pursuing this option owing to the amount of tissue that would be lost. The aggressive preparation of dentine of the incisal edges (Fig. 25). The patient was bothered by the look of his over-lapping maxillary central incisors (Figs. 20 & 21). His mandibular teeth were also crowded, but for some reason, his concern was only with his maxillary teeth. He had started to hide his smile in front of his friends, feeling embarrassed to show his maxillary teeth. After the full orthodontic examination and discussion about all of the treatment options, including comprehensive orthodontic treatment, the patient chose the removable Inman Aligner system owing to its flexibility in that the wearer is able to remove the appliance for several hours a day and because of its short treatment time.

The maxillary left central incisor would have been aggressively prepared had it been treated restoratively. By using a simple anterior alignment technique, the treatment took only eight weeks to straighten the teeth and a great deal of sound enamel tissue was preserved by conservatively resolving the unattractive appearance of the maxillary teeth (Figs. 22 & 23).

Case 2

The second question to be considered regarding treatment would some of the teeth be aggressively prepared or end up with not canal treatment if treated with restorative dentistry without alignment and would the overall outcome be better with alignment rather than without? This question addresses the ethical dilemma general dentists face every day. We often have cases with overlapping anterior incisors in our office.

The patient presented in this case was bothered by the look of his overlapping maxillary central incisors. His mandibular teeth were also crowded, but for some reason, his concern was only with his maxillary teeth. He had started to hide his smile in front of his friends, feeling embarrassed to show his maxillary teeth. After the full orthodontic examination and discussion about all of the treatment options, including comprehensive orthodontic treatment, the patient chose the removable Inman Aligner system owing to its flexibility in that the wearer is able to remove the appliance for several hours a day and because of its short treatment time. The maxillary left central incisor would have been aggressively prepared had it been treated restoratively. By using a simple anterior alignment technique, the treatment took only eight weeks to straighten the teeth and a great deal of sound enamel tissue was preserved by conservatively resolving the unattractive appearance of the maxillary teeth (Figs. 22 & 23).

The treatment plan was to align the teeth first and then to reassess the restorative work needed (Fig. 26). The appliance was used for 12 weeks and only worn for 8 to 10 hours a day. During the last three weeks of alignment, the patient began to bleach his teeth. By week 12, the teeth were straight and white. This clinical approach guarantees that the strength of bonding to the enamel is much greater.

Conclusion

The goal of this article is to encourage general dentists to reflect on the importance of considering short-term tooth alignment alone or in conjunction with restorative dentistry when treating patients. Hopefully, these three questions and cases will prompt readers in thinking through the process of this treatment modality.

Disclosure: Dr Chayah is the trainer for Inman Aligner Training in the Middle East. He provides hands-on full-day certificate courses to general practitioners.

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Editorial note: A complete list of references is available from the publisher.
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