‘Risks vs. Rewards’ in implant dentistry

Dr. Frank Spear will open AO 2016 Annual Meeting with his presentation

By AO Staff

Dr. Frank Spear will open the Academy of Osseointegration’s (AO) 2016 Annual Meeting with his presentation, ‘Globalization of Training, Education and Comprehensive Collaborative Treatment Planning in Implant Dentistry: Understanding the Risks and Rewards.’ Spear has been restoring implants for 30 years and believes technique is one thing but perspective is another.

“When you have been in practice long enough, you start asking different questions about what’s a best practice,” Spear said. “You get to see what performs well and what doesn’t.” Though most of his cases have worked out well, he admits he might have handled some differently. Clinicians should consider both the risks and rewards for patients and what’s ahead for them in their life when placing implants. Spear will suggest key questions to ask when weighing risk vs. reward, such as:

• What is the age of the patient?
• What other conditions of the patient’s health should I consider before I place an implant?
• Can I delay this implant and save the tooth for the benefit of a patient’s long-term dental care?
• What can I do to help prolong the life of the restoration I use on top of the implant?
• What’s going to happen next if something fails?

Spear will also cover the globalization of training and education, and comprehensive and collaborative treatment planning. Using the evolution of implant dentistry from the past three decades, his aim is to identify the best practices today, using the history of the science as a background for their development.

“We honestly didn’t know what we were doing in the ’80s — we were learning and flying by the seat of our pants,” he said. “Technology matured, and we improved in the ’90s and even more in the 2000s. And now we know what works, but we also know what doesn’t work.

“It’s a good timeframe in the history of implants to look back at what we’ve done with a different perspective on it.”

Following Spear’s presentation, clinicians from around the world will present in the opening symposium on the risks and rewards for various topics of concern for today’s dental implant professional. From grafting with growth factors or biologics to not grafting at all, to bone augmentation, and even guided surgery, there are pros and cons to many of the decisions and treatments from which dentists choose.

Spear feels the AO Annual Meeting is a great way for clinicians to stay current on the best practices of implant dentistry. He has always enjoyed the learning aspect of the meeting, collaborating with the best and brightest clinicians from around the world.

“I enjoy getting to hear really bright people who are doing a lot, especially involved with research,” he said. “They are answering a lot of questions we’ve had for years, but we haven’t had the research answers for them.”

The AO 31st Annual Meeting is set for Feb. 17-20 in San Diego. You can register to attend at www.osseo.org. Follow AO on Facebook and Twitter using #AO2016 to stay up-to-date.

About the Academy of Osseointegration (AO)

With 6,000 members in 70 countries around the world, the Academy of Osseointegration is recognized as a premier international association for professionals interested in implant dentistry. The AO serves as a nexus where specialists and generalists can come together to evaluate emerging research, technology and techniques, share best practices, and coordinate optimal patient care using timely, evidence-based information.