Trinon Collegium Practicum: practical implantology courses for clinicians

Continuing education in dental implantology has traditionally focused on theoretical aspects. However, since 2003, the Trinon Collegium Practicum has organized practice-oriented dental implantology courses based on the model of surgeon training in European hospitals, enabling dentists to have a firmer grasp of implantology.

Entering implantology can be difficult for dentists to achieve successfully. It is not a subject of university education, and with international universities and courses being focused largely on theoretical orientation, it proves a time-consuming endeavor. Furthermore, in international education and training programs, the dentists almost never work on patients or might work on phantom cases, classified as hands-on.

This, according to Prof. Rainer Valentin, board member of the German Society for Dental Implantology (DGZI), led to education in implantology placing an increasing emphasis on theoretical training, which then results in a neglect of practical experience and, most importantly, the proof thereof.

This phenomenon is repeated globally and results in dentists often lacking in confidence and developing a fear of complicated cases, which essentially leads to long pauses between individual implants and a limited learning curve.

**Learning by doing**

The Q-Implant Marathon is one reaction to this situation in the continuously growing education sector. Started in 2003 in Cuba, and since conducted more than 70 times in four countries worldwide, the course is designed to be purely hands-on with a real patient experience under strict supervision from international surgeons and university hospitals. Participants with a strong theoretical foundation in implantology spend five days assisting in and performing surgery, placing approximately 30 implants within this short period.

“One only is confident doing what one knows,” said Dr. Harald Glas from Vienna, summarizing the positive effect of practical education. During the Q-Implant Marathon, Glas worked with international peers and supervisors on several cases a day. Every case is discussed beforehand with the supervising tutor and assisting surgeon. Furthermore, even during the surgery, questions about surgical treatments are addressed.

Patients are prepared and followed up by the resident team of the university hospital and, in most cases, are immediately provided with long-term temporary restorations so participants can see the result of the treatment and complete their photographic documentation.

The phased approach of the Q-Implant Marathon, which accounts for 45 CME points, divides participants in three levels: Beginner, Advanced I and Advanced II.

This gives dental practitioners an opportunity to learn the relevant practical knowledge they require at their home clinics.

Beginners’ courses are working on basic implant cases whereas surgeons with considerable experience can venture into more complicated cases with the knowledge and safety of having a supervisor to discuss the case and assist during surgery.

The concept of hands-on courses has been influenced by surgeon training in European hospitals where emphasis on practical surgical training of young doctors is at the center from day one. The experienced surgeon guides the hand of the assistant physician and gives him the feeling for working on patients while in a safe and controlled environment.

“Learning by doing is the most successful way to gain experience in implantology and that is why we do it that way,” said Dr. Alfredo Valencia, the scientific director of the Q-Implant Marathon program.

**A focus on the United States**

Today, the concept has been rolled out throughout three permanent locations worldwide with one in Dominican Republic and two courses in Asia. In the last eight years, the Trinon Collegium Practicum has seen more than 2,000 dentists participate in the Q-Implant Marathon with more than 12,000 patients treated and more than 30,000 implants placed.

The decision to conduct these hands-on courses in Dominican Republic stems from the rising number of dental implantologists in the United States and its surrounding regions, a growing number of patients demanding a high level of care and the overall lack of practice-oriented courses in close proximity to American dentists. The course in Dominican Republic is based in Santo Domingo and has been conducted more than 26 times. This course collaborates with private clinics, where the clinic equipment is comparable to U.S. standards; similarly, the infrastructure is more or less comparable to the situation in the United States. All of the Trinon Collegium Practicum courses have ensured that conditions under which surgeons work have appropriate standards including surgical equipment, professional tooth scaling for patients, digital X-ray equipment and modern dental treatment chairs.

The head instructor for the Q-Implant Marathon in Santo Domingo is Valencia, who studied human medicine at the Oviedo University in Spain and specialized in stomatology, oral-maxillofacial surgery and implantology over the years. Valencia is supported by a team of assisting tutors, whom he personally recruited. Most of these tutors have learned implantology from him.

“After they train with us, we ask them to work with us,” Valencia said.

The atmosphere is harmonious; even after 12 hours in the surgery room, the groups still like to meet for an evening meal. Courses in Santo Domingo have developed even further over time with regard to patient care and technical aspects of surgery. One of the most important improvements has been patient selection. The local team is now able to assign patients to suit the ability and the needs of participants.

**Contact information**

The Q-Implant Marathon is conducted six to eight times a year in the Dominican Republic and Asia. To find out more about the Q-Implant Marathon, contact Optimum Solution Group, Mac Kubiak, call (877) 705-1002, e-mail info@optimumsolutiongroup.com or visit www.implantologycourses.com