But whose evidence? Why clinically derived research shouldn’t be ignored

By Larry W. White, DDS, MSD, FACD

It takes only a short time for some popular phrases to transform into clichés. Back in the late 1960s and early ’70s, one such cliché that all commentators and writers with “gravis” used too frequently was “living life on the cutting edge.” This clearly implied that unless people engaged in unusual, risky and even unproven behavior, their lives lacked conviction and high purpose. Writers and speakers who favored and promoted this exciting call to action also suggested that those who failed to live life on the cutting edge had somehow sacrificed their God-given innovation and curiosity for intellectual and spiritual stupor.

But was this a fair assessment of more socially conservative people who lived comfortable, productive and somewhat predictable lives away from the so-called frontiers of progress? Of course not, and that general appreciation probably contributed to the phrase’s quick loss of potency and degeneration into a cliché that no longer holds much relevance.

Dentistry has recently coined a phrase that, for me, has quickly turned into a tired, impotent and overused slogan: evidence-based dentistry. This has evolved as a mantra of academia because scientists rule in this environment and have opportunity to engage in objective studies that limit the force of extraneous influences.

Professional journals and organizations have eagerly hoisted this new banner and dedicated entire issues and conferences to its primacy. But the implication remains that prior to this new dedication to evidence, dentistry operated by myth and magic. This impugns the integrity, dedication and usefulness of previous efforts to discover the truth of professional matters and denigrates the developments and applications of our collective experience.

Evidence
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Retention you can depend on
New Vivera retainers challenge traditional ways of thinking by offering four sets instead of one

By Joanna Farber

You have just spent approximately 18 months getting Jimmy's teeth perfectly aligned. Now it's time to work on retaining his beautiful smile for years to come.

Orthodontists are in wide agreement that effective retention is a critical factor in maintaining treatment results — so you know you need something that will really work. You could go with a traditional retainer and hope Jimmy wears it as directed. Or you could try something new.

Enter Vivera™ retainers. The subscription-based program introduced by Santa Clara, Calif.-based Align Technology, Inc. in late 2007 challenges the once-held theory that one retainer is enough to prevent relapse. With Vivera retainers, patients receive four sets of fresh retainers over time.

When Align Technology, makers of Invisalign aligners, explored the dental retainer field, its researchers found that retainer materials lose their ability to deliver force over time, and can fail or break down by warping, tearing and cracking after as little as two to three months of normal daytime use.

Retention
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