



Christian Berger

“Electronics and computers are the new focal point of diagnostics and therapy in dental practice”

By Christian Berger, President of the European Association of Dental Implantologists—BDIZ EDI

■ The 34th International Dental Show will certainly take many of us by surprise with new methods and products. I guess, the one thing we are all waiting for is one of the big implant manufacturers to step forward and reveal the first implant

based on zirconium oxide. While often introduced but never actually launched onto the market, full-ceramic implants are very suitable for aesthetic dentistry due to their high biocompatibility and colour. On the other hand, they also have to have

custom yet individualized prosthetics and be resistant to long-term wear.

Let us take, for example, innovative implant surfaces and treatment concepts with angulated implants.

Without these new developments and advancements that result in an ongoing improvement of medical products, less implant systems, surfaces and bone augmentation materials would be available today. Instead, implant dentists have now a range of specific surgical techniques and materials for different indications to their disposal.

This leaves both users and patients puzzled about the right choice and, first and foremost, product safety. Conditioned surfaces, for example, which have been hydroxylated with hydroxide ions shortly before insertion to provide more stability and improved osseointegration in the final healing phase are raising the question whether reliable clinical studies exist that determine that these special conditioned surfaces allow reduced healing times.

Another focus will be on biotechnological strategies for osteogenesis. Especially in the field of synthetic bone augmentation materials, the range of products is sheer endless. While some have been developed to function as a placeholder for new bone formation, other materials are supposed to replace autologous bone transplantations entirely. How proved and tested are new products—such as pig's collagen matrix “from the blister”—which are supposed to replace autologous connective tissue grafts for recession covering and to achieve soft tissue augmentation?

Despite these technological developments in materials, electronics and computers are the new focal point of diagnostics and therapy in dental practice. The spectrum ranges from 3-D imaging and computer-assisted implantology to digital impression taking and automatic fabrication in dental laboratories. In diagnostics, there are many software companies by now that provide computer-assisted planning based on DVT-scans. At IDS, implant dentists will be on the look-out for software solutions that can process a majority of the established implant systems.

Opto-digital methods that do not require impressions and/or dental casts have been developed for CAD/CAM supported production of implant prosthetics. Chair side prosthetics with scanner in one session have been announced for IDS. According to the industry, dentists will be able to produce individualized components for aesthetics, for example, with these systems.

It is not easy trying to constantly achieve better results and shorter treatment times when working on such a high level and with success rates that are able to outdo any other field in medicine. It is biology that is still setting natural limits. Therefore, it is important to continuously educate dentists who are doing implants not only to let them benefit from technical innovations and new developments in materials but also to let them keep up with the well-being of their patients. ♦♦

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