A double-edged sword

From 1 to 3 October, the 2020 World Congress of the International Society for Laser Dentistry (ISLD) will be held in Cairo in Egypt. In the run-up to the congress this autumn, *laser* had a chance to talk to Dr Youssef Sedky, the Organising Chairman of the event, about why Egypt was chosen as host country of the 2020 conference, what differentiates the dental laser market in Egypt, and why he employs laser technology in his own dental practice.

Dr Sedky, this year the ISLD World Congress will take place in Cairo, Egypt and you have been appointed as its Organising Chairman. What can participants expect from the event?
It was a great honour for me when the ISLD board entrusted me with the task of organising their upcoming 18th World Congress. We are currently in the midst of preparing for and crafting a world-class event that rests on three main pillars; for one thing, there will be a very strong scientific programme that is enriched by numerous internationally renowned key opinion leaders in the field of laser dentistry, who will present and discuss the latest in dental laser innovations. Secondly, there will be an industry exhibition with 22 manufacturing companies showcasing their products. There, participants of the conference will have another great opportunity to learn more about the latest in state-of-the-art dental technologies. Thirdly, there will be plenty of social events where congress participants will have the chance to enjoy and unwind in their spare time, right on the banks of Cairo's magical river Nile.

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What were the key reasons behind choosing Egypt as venue for the congress?
Egypt is a very old and ancient country with more than seven thousand years of civilisation. It has a great and incredibly rich history and culture. When we voted for the host country of the 2020 conference, we agreed that Egypt would be the best pick, as the country encapsulates the philosophy of laser technology perfectly through a mix of science and authenticity. Also, it is for this reason that the official congress theme "History Carved with Laser" was chosen.

What differentiates the Egyptian laser dentistry market from other markets?
The introduction of dental laser systems to the Egyptian market was relatively challenging. Dentists here in Egypt were motivated to go for this new technology, since they realised the opportunity to be able to provide the best possible treatment results yet with it. However, there were great challenges in terms of initially approaching dental laser technology, mainly owing to the fact that it is simply a vast field with numerous different wavelengths for different indications being available. I would say that educating dentists and providing them with in-depth knowledge was the first step towards success. Nowadays, dental lasers are an incredibly popular technology and laser systems are in high demand, both among dentists and patients.

How do dental lasers contribute to your own clinical practice? What are the main indications you use them for?
In my dental office, the dental laser is an essential tool within the day-to-day workflow, since I am able to optimise all of my treatment results with it. As for my specialisation as an orthodontist, I use the dental laser for numerous surgical procedures, including the exposure of impacted canines, or labial and lingual frenectomies. In addition, I often utilise low-level laser therapy for pain control and for accelerating the rate of orthodontic tooth movements.

What are the overriding challenges laser dentistry is facing today?
Actually, I would argue that laser dentistry is a double-edged sword. Of course, the clinical benefits of dental lasers are manifold and simply cannot be overlooked. The problem is that a lot of clinicians working in the dental field wrongly think that it's only about pressing a couple of buttons in order to successfully and effectively implement dental laser technologies into pre-existing workflows and treatment processes. However, one cannot deny that a great deal of in-depth professional knowledge is required first before dental lasers can be implemented successfully. And professional knowledge can only be obtained through first-rate education and a lot of further clinical training. Only when dentists put this kind of effort into such a sensitive and complex technology can they then begin to successfully capitalise on its benefits and provide their patients with the best treatment outcomes.

ISLD International Society for Laser Dentistry

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Where do you see dental laser technologies in five to ten years from now?
I personally see dental lasers as a smart technology that serves the dentist in a variety of different dental disciplines. They are able to solve treatment challenges that no other available dental tool is able to tackle successfully. In addition, given the steadily growing awareness and the increasing level of information among patients today, I guess that dental laser systems will soon become a mandatory tool in every dental clinic. However, as is the case with many medical disciplines, further research and technological advancements are needed in order to make lasers more feasible and accessible for dentists.

about the interviewee

Egypt-based **Dr Youssef Sedky** holds a PhD in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopaedics. He completed the MSc programme "Lasers in Dentistry" at RWTH Aachen University, Germany. In addition, he lectures at the Aachen Dental Laser Center (AALZ) and at the Department of Orthodontics of the Misr International University (MIU) in Cairo. He is also a head of the Dental Laser Center at the Faculty of Dentistry of the MIU.

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