

Ceramic implantology in Europe

Initiating change and creating synergies

In 2018, the European Academy of Ceramic Implantology (EACim) was founded to help promote advancements in ceramic implantology in Europe. In this interview with ceramic implants, EACim President Dr Giancarlo Bianca elaborates on the need for an additional expert society dedicated to zirconia implants.

Dr Bianca, thank you for your time. In 2018, you and your colleagues founded the EACim. As President of one of the most ambitious projects in recent ceramic implants initiatives, can you tell us what the EACim stands for and what its goals are?

Implantology is a European innovation and the ceramic implant has been European ever since its development by Prof. Sami Sandhaus in 1968 and since its current evolution of the zirconia implant. We, the six founding members of this European academy, are private practitioners, teachers or lecturers with at least ten years of

experience in the practice of zirconia implants. Our objectives are to develop clinical research and to share experiences with as many as possible of those colleagues who are interested in and who wish to practise ceramic oral implantology. We wish to be able to influence the industrial development of these products and to create confraternal links between practitioners from different European countries, with ambassadors in each of them to help federate the whole academy.

These objectives will be based on three developmental axes: (1) training through congresses, workshops, universities or private teaching in ceramic implantology as an alternative to titanium; (2) the sharing of our clinical experiences in order to evaluate current zirconia implant systems or influence those in development, so that the voices of clinicians can be heard by the industrialists involved in research and development; and (3) the initiation of multicentre clinical studies.



Fig. 1: From left: Dr Simon Tordjman (EACim Vice President), Dr Philippe Duchatelard (EACim Partnership Manager), Dr Fabrice Baudot (EACim Scientific Leader), Dr Stéphanie Gouriran (EACim Treasurer), Dr Franz-Jochen Mellinghoff (EACim Ambassador for Germany), Dr Pascal Eppe (EACim Secretary), Dr Giancarlo Bianca (EACim President) and Dr Pascal Valentini (EACim Honorary President).



Fig. 2: EACim President Dr Giancarlo Bianca at the 2019 EACim congress in Paris.

Why do you deem it necessary for ceramic implantology to have dedicated institutions, as opposed to the ones associated with titanium implant systems?

We do not exclude any partnership with recognised companies in the field of metallic implantology—they are essential for the development of implantology, and we are members of some of them—but there is a need to allow the emergence of a practice of zirconia implantology and develop its specificities and its influence. It seems to us judicious that it should have its own identity. This should avoid confusion and improve the effectiveness of the message. It's the same for the written press, don't you think?

The EACim is quite an active community with numerous educational events throughout the year. What are the key aspects of the EACim's educational profile?

The main educational profile is to bring together practitioners who use zirconia implants and to give a voice to the most experienced and recognised for their skills in this field through forums such as our annual congress. Here, fundamental and clinical aspects are discussed and workshops held to address practical matters.

What are the major challenges that ceramic implantology is facing at the moment?

Zirconia implantology began in the 1990s with monobloc implants that limited the mechanical risk of fracture but complicated the surgical protocol. According to recent studies, this type of implant is the closest to the natural root and presents little risk of bacterial contamination, but this monobloc form necessarily limits the indications. The challenges are to be able to carry out the greatest

number of clinical cases with ceramic implants, to have the same designs as those for titanium, with the same mechanical reliability, and to have the possibility of making all types of screw-retained prostheses on ceramic supports. Important also is the development of the digital workflow from surgery to prosthesis delivery, knowing that zirconia implants are well adapted to optical impression taking and CAD/CAM prostheses, and the development of static and dynamic navigation systems adapted for the optimisation of ceramic implant surgery.

What do you predict for ceramic implantology in five to ten years from now?

In terms of the market share of ceramic implants compared with titanium implants, it will certainly grow faster than the overall implant market as more patients embrace the concept of metal-free implants. This entails a choice of ceramic material that is more inert in the mouth and more suitable for patients with immune hypersensitivity or periodontal disease and for patients with autoimmune diseases. There are projections from various institutions giving a growth of 20% at five years and 30% at ten years, but the current differential in volumes of ceramic implants compared with titanium is significant. We are noticing the beginning of practices that focus on this type of implant. This is the case for a number of practitioners in our academy who have already made the choice of using ceramic implants exclusively.

The 2nd EACim Congress was initially scheduled to take place in Brussels in Belgium this coming spring, but has now been postponed to 2021 owing to the travel and other restrictions that have arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic. Have you already agreed on a new date?

We very much regret that we were unable to hold the very much anticipated 2nd EACim Congress in Brussels this spring. However, the current situation has left us no choice but to postpone the conference until next year, as is the case with many other professional societies at the moment. The new date for the 2nd EACim Congress will be 16–17 April 2021. We sincerely hope that the current situation will soon change for the better and that we can start preparing for next year's congress full of vim and vigor.

contact

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