

Implantology still runs the **business in 2007**

Surfaces, zirconoxide-coated implant components and CAD/CAM-systems are the big topics

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With two-digit rates of growth and an unstoppable speed of innovation in 2006 implantology was, without a doubt, the motor of dentistry. Whether in the media or at trade fairs or congresses—the central topic of 2007 remains “implantology”.

Today, there are more than 50 providers of implant systems in Germany, and we are also facing a vast number of implant configurations. As in 2006, numerous new or modified implant systems will be introduced during this 2007 IDS-year. Furthermore, national and international providers of implant systems and implantology complement products will increasingly search for opportunities on the German market.

There is no other specialty field that has a comparable media presence such as implantology. Thus, all high-volume dental publications dedicate at least one issue per year to the subject of implantology, next to a number of about ten implantology specialized magazines published in Germany. With the International Dental Show in Cologne, this trend is going to experience an even higher level. The branch rearms and increases with two-digit rates of growth while yet again relying on innovations where two different directions of development are looming.

First, improved hard- and soft-tissue integration of implant-assisted dentures shall be achieved by increased optimization of implants surfaces and designs, as well as the insert of a new generation of osteoanagenesis materials. Simultaneously, zircon as an alternative implant material, gains importance according to the aesthetic point of view and particularly with regard to a perio-integration that will positively influence the long-term effects of implants.

In the future, almost all well-known implant providers will include metal-free solutions within their product series. In this context, for the IDS we may expect a “high tech” zirconoxide-coating therapy for implant components developed by a German/Swiss group. This therapy shall associate the known advantages of titanium with the tissue friendliness of zirconoxide on behalf of an optimized perio-integration.

The second trend especially implies the idea of a conceptual connection between surgery and prosthodontics with aspects of fabrication, that is, the implantology solution at least with regard to the

chain of added value. In times where the bosses of internationally operating enterprises proclaim that the implants being provided on the dental market are substitutable, a differentiated competition can only be realized by offering ideal dental solutions within which the implant is finally a module on the way to “beautiful teeth”.

This is at least the philosophy of a global market leader who does not necessarily consider himself to be a provider of implants. Instead, he wants to give back a beautiful and resplendent smile to his patients—whether implant assisted or conventional. Accordingly, the current navigation systems play a central role within this concept due to the fact that they allow the exact planning of an implant's position and of the prosthetic supply so that a surgical operation as well as the prosthetic supply can be realized within one session. Nevertheless, opinions are drifting apart in regards to the question of whether an implant should be inserted where natural bone material already exists or whether artificial bone material should be added instead in order to place the implant in the most optimal way.

However, an “ideal solution” for all indications does not exist and there is no “gold standard”. But a vast number of factors characterize the individual search for an ideal solution. Accordingly, next to limiting factors concerning the patients, such as time, money, individual demands, the physical and psychological ability to cope with strain, there are also limiting factors concerning the therapists which should also be taken into consideration.

For one patient an overlay prosthesis in the lower jaw being assisted by two ball-head attachments might be the “ideal” supply, but for another patient the solid implant-assisted or removable high-end-dentures, including expensive augmentative measures as well as gingiva-remodelling, might be the ultimate solution. After all, most modern techniques as well as ingenious and optimized implant systems are nothing without a dentist's specialized skills.