



A gentle nudge

Michael Sultan looks at the technology available to help motivate patients.

For many years now I've been absolutely fascinated by the small things that influence and encourage us to behave in certain ways. These small 'nudges' and 'pushes' may lead us to choose one brand over another, or even alter our daily routine.

As dental professionals we are in a prime position to similarly influence how people behave, though generally speaking, we are not very good at it. This may be because we don't have the time, desire or even financial incentive to have a lasting impact on people's lives. After all, we only see patients for a limited period, and changing behaviour takes time. Simply giving advice very rarely works as people listen, leave the practice, and return to their normal routine as they have no motivation to follow up on the things that we suggest.

The problem is that many people are not inclined to take advice if they don't see immediate benefits. Take blood pressure tablets for example. This medication has very low levels of compliance as patients don't see any direct benefits and therefore don't appreciate the difference the medication makes. While a doctor may note a five-point drop in systolic blood pressure, this figure is completely academic from the patient's point of view. It's not until they actually meet someone who has suffered a stroke that they realise the awful consequences high blood pressure can create. ➔



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Implant Case Notes



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Implant-supported tooth was even better than patient expected

A 19-year-old woman was referred to implant dentist Graham Browning because she was unhappy with the appearance of her smile. She had a retained upper right deciduous tooth and a lateral incisor that was proclined.

Dr Browning explains, "The patient had previously had the buried canine tooth removed, and had been told the root of the incisor next to it was damaged. She decided to have dental implant treatment to restore both her upper right canine and lateral incisor, so that they matched those on the left side."

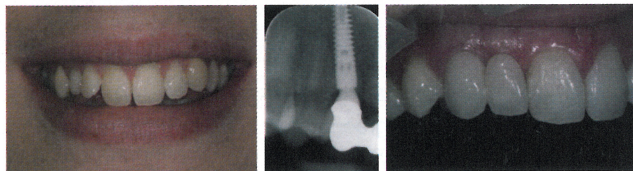
The two troublesome teeth were removed, and an A14 ANKYLOS® implant was placed in the upper right canine tooth position. A Valoplast denture was placed as a temporary restoration whilst the implant was integrating.

Graham Browning says, "I have been using ANKYLOS® implants in the aesthetic zone for nearly ten years. A major advantage is the way the gum sits around the implant and the final crown."

After three months, the implant had integrated and the gum had healed. The implant was uncovered and an impression taken at the same visit. The laboratory was instructed to copy the emergence profile of the upper left canine and lateral incisor teeth, and to make an aesthetic pontic. The abutment was fitted and torqued to 15N.

Two weeks later a cantilever bridge was fitted. The pontic area was incised to allow an aesthetic gumline to develop around the final restoration. The result was a beautiful and natural looking smile. The patient was returned to her general practitioner for routine care.

The two year review shows that the appearance has been maintained long-term. Dr Browning says, "The patient was delighted with the whole treatment journey and felt the end result was better than she could have hoped for."



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