

Competence in aesthetics extended to include digital competence

For the third time, Gernot Schuller (Senior Director Austria & Eastern Europe) and his team succeed in drawing participants from all over the world to Vienna. "Competence in Aesthetics" was held, by tradition, at the Austria Center Vienna from 10 to 11 November 2017. The key factors of this exceptional conference include: 1400 participants from 36 countries, 21 speakers from 10 nations and 15 exhibitors.

Digitization in dental technology has changed the industry in recent years and has also influenced the orientation of Ivoclar Vivadent as a company. Robert Ganley (CEO Ivoclar Vivadent) was in Vienna. In his opening speech, he told the audience that digitization is a megatrend predicted by reputable futurologists not only for the dental world. The question is not whether digitization is changing the industry, but at what speed.

Digitization and implantology

The conference focused on two areas: digitization and implantology. For the first time ever, participants were able to interactively shape the contents of the event. Ivoclar Vivadent developed an app that enabled the audience to pose questions to the speakers. The questions were discussed after each block of presentations.

Tailor-made digitization

Digitization is entering all areas of dentistry and dental technology. How high its involvement in the workflow is depends on the indication and treatment. Dr. Tim Joda spoke of "tailor-made digitization". With this term, he referred to technology that is backed by human know-how. Together with Dr. Stefan Röhling, Dr. Knut Hufschmidt and Prof. Dr. Irena Sailer, he was among the speakers who primarily presented topics on implantology and the effects of digitization on implantology and the selection of materials.

CAD/CAM overcomes barriers

CAD/CAM is capable of overcoming barriers of time and space. It was shown by the clinical cases presented by the practice teams of Prof. Dr. Stefan

Koubi and Hilal Kuday as well as Dr. Florin Cofar and Lorant Stumpf. In both teams, dentist and technician are based in different countries. They focus on aesthetics and smile design from both a digital and analogue perspective. Accurate shade matching is key to high-end restoration design; this is one of the areas that has benefitted from the development of digital cameras and image processing systems. Sascha Hein proved this point with his shade system that is based on luminescence and colour components rather than on digital shade guides. "If you are working across distances, you have to be able to rely on the colour on the photo", he said.

Smart combination

Semi-digital is the intelligent combination of analogue and digital tools. Most of the clinical cases shown were solved in this way, because digital technologies still come up against their limits in some circumstances. For instance, digital impression-taking in the edentulous jaw is still unsatisfactory, as Prof. Dr. Florian Beuer explained. Similarly, Dr. Marko Jakovac and Alen Alic pointed out that they still preferred using an analogue layering technique for aesthetic restorations in the anterior region. Only premolars and molars are restored using a monolithic technique in their practice. Jakovac and Alic work in a team of three together with a digital technician, who is responsible for the CAD/CAM applications. Dr. Petr Hajny from Prague is both a dental technician and a dentist. He upgraded his practice to be digital and produces up to a 150 restorations per week as a one-man team. Digitization has turned a vision into reality and has become his favourite pastime. Dr. Gerwin V. Arnetzl also decided early on to go digital. Above all, he sees economic advantages in this technology.

Dental professionals have begun to promote themselves digitally

Digitization has not only changed technology, but it has also revolutionized the media landscape. Many speakers run their own YouTube channel to present their own cases and to arouse the patients'

interest. Milos Miladinov delved deeply into digital photography to be able to use his pictures on social media. "In this way a name becomes a brand and a part of practice marketing", he said.

Patient requirements become more specific

On the basis of information obtained from Instragram, Facebook & Co., today's patients visit the dentist with clear ideas about the treatment that they want. They know exactly which smile and which material they are looking for. "These requests require a reversal process in the planning", said Dr. Stefan Koubi. "We begin with the aesthetic design and then look at the function".

A digitally produced mock-up provides additional certainty that the final result will be successful and fully meet the patient's expectations. This approach is also used by Prof. Dr. Petra Gierthmühlen and Prof. Dr. Irena Sailer, who, at the conference, co-presented with Vincent Fehmer. A physical try-in model makes it easier for patients to visualize their prospective smile. Digitization makes communication easier. This statement was shared by all speakers equally.

Show-stopping applause for top presentation

A highlight was the presentation of Brazilian-born Dr. Ronaldo Hirata, who has made New York his new home. He is a master of staging and showed a video of himself and his way of working, for which he drew applause from the audience during the presentation. He also runs a YouTube channel to report about his work. In his practice, he focuses on non-invasive and minimally invasive restorations, he is a master of the composite resin and an expert on possible sources of errors during composite filling fabrication.

How important is the human factor?

We all have no concerns when it comes to digital technology on our smartphones or digital cameras. In the dental field, however, the change is accompanied by uncertainty. Will the new technologies replace the human factor and analogue know-how? All speakers refuted this statement unanimously. The same

expertise is required for the digital workflow as for the analogue one. Digitization has changed the tool, not the solution, or "first learn to walk, then to fly", as the scientific chairman Prof. Dr. Thomas Bernhart aptly stated.

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