

Comment

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Jonathan Sandler

Go for the 'nice life'

One piece of advice that I have given to every one of my trainees over the past 25 years is to keep the parents out of the treatment room. When is the last time you remember a parent ever making a comment that actually takes the treatment further, in the right direction. It just doesn't happen! They are all too eager to expostulate with whatever clinical decision has been made, or to insist, often on behalf of the entitled generation, on a full and thorough explanation of exactly what is about to be done and then point out that they don't understand (well, why would they . . . not having completed a 5-year dental degree followed by a further 5 or so years of postgraduate training in orthodontics).

Of course the parents should be present for the first visit and again when the treatment approach is explained in detail to ensure fully informed consent is obtained. They should also naturally have access to the clinician, on request, should they have queries about treatment progress. But 'no news, is good news' is by far the best policy, particularly in the open, polyclinic environment, where the patients, the nurses and the clinicians are all in a 'safe environment'. Patients can relax in the knowledge that the person in the next chair is almost certainly undergoing similar procedures to them, and without fuss. Parents can also relax in the waiting room, knowing that as they have not been summoned, treatment continues to progress as expected. Thank goodness they don't actually need to go in to the clinic for yet another discussion about the poor level of their child's oral hygiene or the fact that there are repeated appliance breakages. They will be much relieved!

The clinicians and the nurses will then have a chance to develop a much better relationship directly with the children and the adolescents, in the absence of the 'helicopter parents'. The patients will, for sure, behave so much better than when putting on a 'performance' for their parents. In a recent editorial in *Dental Update*, Professor Trevor Burke highlighted what an incredibly stressful profession dentistry was, in the 21st century. Do this one simple measure, of separating the parents from their offspring, and your working day will immediately destress and the quality of your work environment will improve beyond measure.

In this spring edition of *Orthodontic Update* we have brought together papers on a number of different subjects, including the challenges of: the European Board of Orthodontics, ethical dilemmas that frequently face orthodontists in their everyday practice and the history of tooth transplantation, indications and the factors that can influence outcome. There is also a piece on the 'The Best of Both Worlds': combining specialist practice with hospital consultancy, a formula that seems to be much more popular in these increasingly uncertain times.

All articles published in Orthodontic Update are subject to review by specialist referees in the appropriate dental disciplines.