

Separating the wheat from the chaff

With the massification of digital media, the internet “expert” becomes more common than ever. It is not within the sole domain of dentistry, but rather a privilege of all areas: health professionals know about law, lawyers are keen on engineering, physicians understand what architects do, engineers are familiar to medicine and so on. We are experiencing a revolution in teaching, teachers training is increasing at extraordinary speeds and there is no longer the need for deeper understanding about certain topics. Masters and doctorates are obsolete. The secret is simple: the more we know about photography, the better teachers we become. And, more often than not, we don’t even need to show our work: just show the pictures of our ceramist’s work.

However, beautiful pictures of wonderful restorations are not a problem. At worst, they might frustrate those colleagues who try to compare extremely well-crafted photos with their bread and butter work. The problem begins with the text that follows the photo, often describing incorrect techniques, or without any scientific reasoning, frequently ignoring the future consequences of that treatment. And what a person does in the wrong way ends up being copied by his followers and, as a ripple effect, a mistaken procedure becomes the flavour of the month. We do not have to go that far; we have already been through the acid etching over pulpal tissue, applying adhesive between composite increments, mixing gasoline to the adhesive (the latter is a fallacy, but #getthehint).

We realize that much of what we find, especially in social media, is not necessarily true. If we think of a reason for publishing clinical cases, advices and revolutionary techniques in these media

formats, one will easily see that it aims (of course there are exceptions) at attracting patients, students, getting sponsorship from some company or selling products. What is the average time spent in building a restoration? Now, what is the average time to do a restoration and make the photographic record of the step by step? Who pays for that extra time? Nothing is for free; the disclosure on the internet has to offset the time spent. We very often laugh and think “come off it”, when in face of a powder soap advertisement on TV that wonderfully removes all sorts of stains, don’t we? Why should it be different on social networks when it comes to dentistry? Why do we believe in that “advertisement” as true at all? Are we too lazy to discern between the useful from the unreal? There is a tendency for “fact-check” agencies to begin dictating what is true and what is false, but is this the kind of censorship that we need in dentistry? This flood of information on the Internet forces us to study more and be able to realize what is positive and what we can benefit from on social networks. ●

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