

Are we on the right way?

As I was wondering about what to write to open this section of the Brazilian Group of Restorative Dentistry Professors, I was a bit uncertain about what subject to tackle. The initial idea was to bring about and question the current trends in Restorative Dentistry, like the ultrafine veneers, popularly known as “Contact Lenses”, that have apparently become a panacea for all anterior aesthetic problems (sometimes, posterior as well) in the short-sighted perspective of many dental professionals. As this thought crossed my mind, I was faced with a situation that changed my stance in this article and, in my opinion, should be discussed before any given trends.

As I was tutoring two undergraduate students at the University where I lecture, one of them asked me to assist him at a Fixed Partial Prosthesis case on teeth 11-13. Well, when I kicked in the case was half way done, with the abutments partially prepared, and the student asked for support to conclude the impression procedure. As I looked at the case, I couldn't help noticing that the last thing that patient needed was a fixed prosthesis since she had not only defective restorative works in many of her posterior teeth but also had active carious lesions, occlusal misfits, among other issues. When asked about why would one start a treatment by the end, he answered that he wanted to learn how to address anterior aesthetic issues, for that was where profit would derive.

I have to confess that this made me rather disappointed. As a faculty, I kept thinking about all the information that student was having access to inside the University, but also being influenced by social media, and I realized how Restorative Dentistry was overestimating aesthetics, prioritizing anterior teeth, excessively white, almost identical in shape, under customized, where all that matters is to have a “Hollywood

smile”. What happened to Health Care? Isn't it about time we, opinion leaders, either inside or outside the University, should turn our attention to the new generation of dentists getting their degrees? It's quite possible that pictures of an occlusal adjustment on yellowish teeth, or videos showing how to repair a posterior filling or the right way to use an adhesive system, among other stuff, might not generate too many “likes”, but who knows whether this could trigger a movement that would have our specialty less focused on aesthetics only and starts to address our patients oral health as a whole. Here's some food for thought! ●

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