



A Matter of Perspective

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Traditional dentistry is an offshoot of the medical remedial model that focuses more on treating symptoms, rather than discovering their causes. The articles within the most widely read dental magazines have by far more to do with repairing and replacing teeth, with very little having to do with prevention. This coincides with the fact that their advertisers are companies that sell these repair and replacement products, such as the latest in natural appearing porcelains, dental implant replacement procedures, etc. Today's dentist has opportunities for repairing and replacing teeth with materials and technologies that offer optimum strength and esthetics unheard of in the past. It is also true that this area of dentistry is the highest profit center within most all dental practices.

Health or “Fix-it” Profession?

Dentistry is considered to be a health profession. Logic would dictate that at least as much emphasis would be placed on preventing the need for repair/replacement technology as performing them, but from my experience this does not appear to be the case. I have been taking informal surveys with new patients that come to the Center for several years, and I find that most are lacking in proper information and skills in taking care of their mouths, many of whom have been seeing the dentist regularly. When I ask the question, “Has a dentist or hygienist ever had you show them how you take care of your mouth?” I get around a one in fifty “yes” response. While speaking to a large group of over one hundred dentists, dental hygienists and assistants, I asked the same question and two hands went up.

Mouth and Surrounding Structures are a System

There is more to prevention than dispensing a product or repairing a tooth. Real prevention is a blend of relationship development and oral health environment assessments using microscopic and laboratory oral biofilm analysis that offers data specific to the patient's oral health status – we never see two alike. Also, the mouth being a functional system, we analyze the bite to TMJ relationship to prevent/treat teeth wear and bite related headaches, facial, neck and shoulder pain. From this information, individualized preventive protocols can be developed to optimize the oral system specific to the patient's needs.

Dental Insurance Contradiction

The dental insurance industry allows scant benefits for prevention, mainly treatments such as cleanings and deep cleanings. Absolutely no benefits are allotted for the time it takes to implement these preventive procedures and coaching time to develop a patient's self care skills, crucial to all preventive regimens.

A “Prevention First” Perspective

The Dental Wellness Center was developed based upon a realization that the best of repair and replacement technologies will be undermined if the reason for their need isn't addressed beforehand. This is why we do things a bit differently at the Center, starting with informing a potential new patient about the perspective that lies behind our preventive and treatment offerings before they make that first appointment.