



COMMON SENSE DENTISTRY

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Are you a Super GP?

I WAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED to the term “the Super GP.” The Super GP is a way dental representatives describe a general dentist who is delivering a wide variety of dental services in his or her practice and who also has a depth of knowledge of available dental materials and equipment, so that optimal treatment results can be achieved.

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I had never really thought about this until an American Academy of Facial Esthetics (AAFE) member sent me an e-mail describing AAFE members as Super GPs, because of the many different ways these dentists have expanded their office services in the areas of facial esthetics, facial pain, bruxism therapy, and dental sleep medicine. This has greatly benefited their practices and significantly increased their productivity as described in this *Dental Economics* column in April 2015.

So what makes a Super GP? In my opinion, it is first and foremost having the education and knowledge to use the most innovative and effective dental diagnostics for patients. In addition to the common diagnostics available, a cone beam (i-CAT, Carestream CS 9000, and others) when necessary will provide an incredible diagnostic advantage to many cases. Something now standard for most of my patients is the STATDDS home bruxism/sleep monitor, which sets a baseline for a patient’s bruxism. With bruxism affecting one out of every three patients—and much of it coming as a result of obstructive sleep apnea—the bruxism episodes index (BEI) is vital to assessing the long-term prognosis of every single case.

A Super GP will use super dental materials that are the best choice available for each clinical situation. For direct restorative materials today, nanohybrid composite resins have the ultimate blend of strength and esthetics for universal applications. Some of my favorite nanohybrid composites include G-aenial Sculpt (GC America) and Reflectys (Itena). Indirect restorative crown-and-bridge materials are indeed super in strength, and their esthetics are becoming better than ever. Mono block zirconium, such as BruxZir and BruxZir Anterior (Glidewell), are the overwhelming favorites of general dentists.

In the past, the Super GPs were dentists who incorporated endodontic procedures and cosmetic dentistry into

their practices. Now let’s take a look at areas today’s Super GPs have integrated or are looking to integrate into their practices to expand their service base to be able to deliver better dentistry to their patients.

Bruxism therapy/dental sleep medicine through the use of oral appliances to manage bruxism and obstructive sleep apnea is the first step in any diagnostic and treatment plan. Eliminate the sleep bruxism, and your dentistry will have a great, long-term prognosis. As my good friend and mentor Dr. Gordon Christensen says, “Bruxism episodes index (BEI) is highly advantageous to have before treatment.” (Botox and Fillers in Dentistry DVD, PCC-Dental.com)

Frontline TMJ and orofacial pain treatment with trigger-point therapy has been an absolute lifesaver to so many AAFE member practices because of how frustrating these cases were to treat in the past. Trigger-point therapy is accomplished on the muscles that cause orofacial and TMJ pain. Super GPs don’t ignore or run from these patients; instead, they now have an evidence-based, long-lasting, minimally invasive treatment that has made thousands of patients’ lives so much better.

Dental implants: I can tell you from many Super GPs who are AAFE members that this is well within the realm of every single general dentist who should follow the path of learning the simple surgical implant cases through a process the AAFE teaches called “brain-guided” implant surgery and then systematically work up to more complex cases under the AAFE mentorship program.

Facial esthetics with botulinum toxin (Botox, Xeomin) and dermal fillers in the oral and maxillofacial areas are an integral part of thousands of dental practices. Every dentist has the skill and basic knowledge to learn these nonsurgical, minimally invasive treatments that are part of every esthetic, implant, and restorative case.

If I have to boil it down to one line, it would be this: The Super GP today can make his or her patients sleep great, feel great, and look great. These Super GPs love to learn and are excited and passionate about dentistry. Every dentist can and should be a Super GP; the secret is to learn something new and get trained today! **DE**