

VIEW FROM THE PRACTICE

Clinical editor Rahul Doshi provides some pointers for dentists looking to invest in new technology

Innovations in dentistry are usually the driving force behind taking dentistry to higher levels and pushing new frontiers. This in turn creates a new type of experience in dentistry for both our patients and for us. It also elevates our profession in its entirety to be recognised as modern and forward thinking. However, often these innovations are hidden and it's not so easy to understand their varied applications. Another inhibiting aspect of these clever designs is that often multiple types and styles enter the market at similar times. This makes it even more difficult for the practitioner to decipher the most appropriate innovation for them. The result is often confusion leading to delay in advancement.

One of the major areas of dentistry that has led to high levels of frustrations in the past has been the creation of indirect restorations. Amongst some of the key problems we have all faced at one time or another with the conventional impression techniques and indirect restoration work are:

- Re-impressions lead to increased chair time and wastage of materials
- Inaccurate impression technique starts the ball rolling in the wrong way
- Poor margins leading to poor fits
- Chipped stone models leads to inaccuracies
- Remakes cost time and money
- Increased chairside time due to adjustments again cost time and money
- Tight or loose contacts lead to further adjustments and increased chair time

- Incorrect aesthetics
- Incorrect occlusion, e.g. high spots are very frustrating and often lead to future occlusal inaccuracies and interferences
- High levels of frustration with negative effects on the team
- Blame culture creates bad relationships between practice and labs
- Major inconveniences for our patients leading to medico-legal problems.

All these factors lead to increased stress and frustration that ultimately are bad for everyone involved, including your patients. Patients suffering inconveniences due to inaccuracies in the conventional techniques often leads to mistrust and loss of confidence in the practice involved.

DIGITAL OPTIONS

Currently there are a number of products newly entering the market and some that have been there for a while that provide some of the answers, such as Sirona's in-house system Cerec, Cadent iTero, E4D from Henry Schein, 3M Lava COS scanner and 3-Shape.

One consideration for a clinician when choosing one of these pieces of equipment would be the type of practice you have and how you practise your dentistry; this would dictate what technology you purchase and how you use that equipment. Also, you need to factor in how you propose to get a return on that investment. Hence, such a purchase would require you to do your due diligence and research.

The latest innovations are digital



impressions and digital models combining with the latest CAD-CAM technology to bring about an enhanced system. Cadent iTero has claimed to have produced that harmony. Though it does not allow for in-house milling, it can be very good. For any impression system to work well for both the clinician and the laboratory, there needs to be an accurate high quality set of models created. Cadent's iTero is a system which creates simply articulated models from milled polyurethane after having received digital scans. This creates an ideal situation for all involved.

The choice of system that a dentist goes for is often dependant upon how that technology is going to be beneficial to the practice as a business as well as the ease with which it can be incorporated within the daily schedules. Cerec for instance can mill out single indirect restorations with great ease; however, if you have a good relationship with an artistic ceramist and your aesthetic needs are higher, then perhaps the iTero system or the Lava COS may be more suitable.

It is well worth dedicating some time to understanding these technologies and seeing if they are right for your practice. They can help to improve patient care, reduce chair time, reduce stress and also improve profitability. This is setting newer and higher standards in delivering and experiencing premium dentistry. Digital dentistry that is in harmony with patient, clinician and laboratory technician is the new future of indirect restorations.

Have your say on Rahul's views: email us at comments@ppdentistry.com

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TABLE 1: NEW TECHNOLOGY

	Sirona CEREC	Lava COS 3M	iTero	E4D Sky
CHAIRSIDE	✓	✗	✗	✓
LABORATORY OPTIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓
SCANNER: DIGITAL IMPRESSIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓
IN-HOUSE MILLING	✓	✗	✗	✓