Interview: “Endodontic treatment is an invaluable therapeutic technique”

By DTI

From 4 to 7 October, the world of endodontics have been meeting in the South Korean capital of Seoul for the 11th International Federation of Endodontic Associations (IFEA) World Endodontic Congress (WEC). In light of the event, which has attracted dental professionals from all around the world for many years, Dental Tribune Online spoke with IFEA 2018 Chairperson Dr Andy Euisoeng Kim.

Dr Kim, how would you describe your experience as chairperson of the IFEA WEC 2018 Seoul local organising committee?

First of all, it is my great honour and pleasure to be a part of the local organising committee. I’ve learnt so much while preparing for this gathering. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone for the support they’ve shown us so constantly. I feel so blessed, and it could not have been done without that cooperation and support.

Second, I have been pleased to see Korean dentists demonstrating their excellent capability. They perform excellent endodontic treatment, even in poor environments, and all the techniques of endodontic treatment are controlled perfectly with the support of the government health insurance system. I can confirm that these researchers are conducting world-class research.

Finally, it has been a valuable experience to feel the unity of the members of the Korean Academy of Endodontics.

WEC 2018 Seoul will come to Korea from 70 countries all over the world. Personally, I am thrilled to meet endodontists from all over the world. I know that it will be a wonderful experience to meet participants from far away and from closer to home. Furthermore, I hope that IFEA 2018 will continue to grow into a global organisation representing the whole world.

The theme of this year’s meeting is “Endodontics: The utmost values in dentistry. Can you explain what is behind this and how you identify with it?”

Endodontic treatment is an invaluable therapeutic technique that can keep natural teeth healthy. The reach of its use depends on the country, and I have felt sorry that endodontic treatment has been more neglected than other fields, given its importance. We have various difficulties, especially with the limited choices for dentists, because of the government’s medical insurance system.

With this point of view, I came to the idea of going back to the basics and asked ourselves a fundamental question: what is most important for national oral health? A fancy building may be nice to look at, but it will not last long if the groundwork is not done properly. Likewise, our efforts to keep our natural teeth healthy for the long term should never be underestimated.

Why do you think meetings such as IFEA’s WEC are important for the endodontic community?

This is an absolutely necessary meeting. The American Association of Endodontists meeting, the European Society of Endodontology meeting and the WEC of IFEA are the standard meetings of international endodontic societies, but while the meetings arranged by the first two associations are locally constrained, the IFEA gathering is the only academic congress that covers international endodontic treatment. Membership of IFEA continues to increase, and 36 countries have enrolled in IFEA as member countries.

It is natural that there’s level of difference depending on the country, and believe everyone will level up through this kind of meeting. By doing so, we can contribute to the positive development of human beings, which is IFEA’s primary value. Also, the meeting promotes fellowship among endodontists and exchange of experiences and ideas in a way that will maximize synergy in our field by sharing information with one another.

What are your expectations/hopes for the meeting, and what are you most looking forward to personally?

I am so excited about the meeting. The largest number of participants of all of past IFEA WECs will come to Korea from 70 countries all over the world. Personally, I am thrilled to meet endodontists from all over the world. I know that it will be a wonderful experience to meet participants from far away and from closer to home. Furthermore, I hope that IFEA will continue to grow into a global organisation representing the whole world.

Interview: “I saw a lot of improvements in every step of the endodontic treatment”

By DTI

Besides running a private practice concentrating mainly on endodontic dentistry, Dr Filippo Cardinali gives lectures in theoretical and practical courses on subjects related to the isolation of the operative field and endodontics. He also often participates as a speaker at courses and conferences in Italy and abroad including the 11th International Federation of Endodontic Associations (IFEA) World Endodontic Congress, which has been taken place from 4 to 7 October in Seoul in Korea. In an interview with Dental Tribune Online, Cardinali shared his thoughts on lecturing at the event.

Dr Cardinali, why did you pick endodontics as your specialty? What do you see the challenges and the excitement?

After graduating in dentistry, I worked as a dental officer for one year at the Cagliari Military Hospital in Sardinia. At that time, military service was mandatory in Italy. The aim of the military surgery was to manage patients with emergencies. So, from the beginning of my career I started treating many patients with endodontic problems.

Once I had finished my military service, I started working as an assistant in dental clinics where I mainly dealt with endodontic and restorative problems. To improve my knowledge and to better understand the importance of endodontic treatment as part of a multidisciplinary treatment, I started attending the meetings of the Italian Society of Endodontics. At that time, in 1993, the Internet was not as widespread as today and social media did not exist, so the only way to be updated about endodontic techniques and materials was to attend congresses. Being part of the Italian Society of Endodontists had opened up a new world for me. At the beginning, it was a bit frustrating because it seemed like a big challenge to reach the levels of knowledge and skill of the speakers. But, thanks to the Italian Endodontics Society meetings, I obtained the incentives and tools to improve myself over time.

Today, I am very proud to be on the board of the society as treasurer. Basically, in my daily routine, what I do is just to try to save teeth with proper root canal treatments. The challenge with endodontic anatomy is as exciting as it is satisfying to see long-term follow-ups that attest to the validity of our work.

Despite taking place in Korea, do you think that the IFEA congress is important for the international endodontic community? If so, why?

I honestly think that the IFEA congress is really important, because it is a moment of aggregation between all the worldwide endodontic societies. In addition to the pleasure of meeting, and the opportunity to meet, many colleagues from other countries, there is the opportunity to compare, for example, how other endodontic societies face the daily challenges that all societies have today, like maintaining high quality in terms of instruction, how they interact with the scientific societies of other branches of dentistry.

What is the title of the lecture you will be giving at IFEA and what is it about?

My lecture is called “Solutions to simplify shaping and cleaning, improving the quality of the root canal treatment”. My thoughts are those of an endodontics enthusiast who, like every passionate clinician, tries to increase the success rates of endodontic therapy in the most predictable way possible. Also, the quality of my work depends essentially on the satisfaction of my patients.

When I started my practice there were five to hand files and three to four shaping techniques. Nowadays, the technology has changed completely and clinicians have access to exceptional tools for endodontic therapy. There is a risk in relying on those very evolved instruments and in thinking that they are more important for a positive treatment outcome than the endodontic knowledge. If any problem occurs during instrumentation, such as the separation of an instrument or the creation of a stripping or a ledge, whose fault is it? Is it the fault of the tool or the clinician? What is more important? Tools or technique?

You have been working as an endodontist for many years now. Where do you see the biggest development in the field?

In my 26 years of practising dentistry, I saw a lot of improvements in every step of the endodontic treatment. And what is even more important is that these improvements saved the endodontist’s life and at the same time improved the quality of the therapy. Our lives have changed and our outcome has increased thanks to the introduction of MTA, NiTi rotary files and ultrasonic tips dedicated to endodontics for cleaning, retroformation in surgery or for the removal of separate files during retreatments.

Nowadays, diagnosis for complex cases is easier thanks to the CBCT. And, what about obstructions with the introduction of bacitracin scalers? These are all innovations that a clinician that takes care of patients cannot miss. My workflow and my instruments have changed completely in comparison to the beginning of my practice. The difficult part has increased your own work habits, but when the final results are an improvement of the quality of your professional life and a better outcome for the patient, putting the work in is definitely worth it.

The continuous evolution makes endodontics a branch that certainly is not boring. And this is very exciting for the clinician and I am sure that in the future new techniques and materials will come that will further improve the quality of our treatments.