Putting Perio Right

If, on average, we see two patients each day who may lose their teeth through perio problems, what are we doing to combat the problem?

Philip R. Greene, United Kingdom

Statistics, love them or hate them, can help us to understand some of life’s mysteries. With that in mind, what percentage of your patients do you think have destructive periodontal disease? You know, the sort that leads to loose teeth, recurrent abscesses, tooth loss and all that.

If you said 90%, either your perio probe is too sharp or I’d advise you to move your practice as soon as possible. But, if you said anything between 10% and 20%, you’d have been in the right ballpark (American Academy of Periodontology, 2010). Since that’s the case, you need to focus your efforts on preventing what you don’t want to treat.

New Toothbrush Sanitizing Device May Kill Germs in Bristles

By Daniel Zimmermann

A new device called Germ Terminator may kill the germs that live in toothbrushes and causes infections with bacteria like Streptococcus mutans, Staphylococcus aureus, Porphyromonas gingivalis, Herpes simplex virus, and Candida Albicans. By Daniel Zimmermann

A new device called Germ Terminator may kill the germs that live in toothbrushes and causes infections with bacteria like Streptococcus mutans, Staphylococcus aureus, Porphyromonas gingivalis, Herpes simplex virus, and Candida Albicans. Researchers have proposed links between lingering colds and sore throats to reinfection from contaminated toothbrushes. There is also evidence that bacteria involved in chronic oral infections may play a role in heart attacks, diabetes, and premature births.

"Dental hygienists always speak about the importance of good oral hygiene, but it’s more than just brushing and flossing," said Maria Perno Goldie (RDH, MS), former president of the American Dental Hygienists’ Association (ADHA). "If bacteria from your own mouth, from multiple toothbrushes stored in the same cup, or even bacteria from the bathroom are allowed to build up on the toothbrush you use every day, then the simple act of brushing can propel germs into your bloodstream, possibly triggering infection.”

After brushing, manual toothbrushes or power toothbrush heads are placed in the Germ Terminator together with pure water, where it uses steam and dry heat to eliminate 99.999% of germs. It’s sanitizing action is modeled after the sterilization equipment used in dental offices and is said to be safe, economical, and easy to use.