**“Our company is well equipped to provide education to dentists from anywhere in the world”**

An interview with Dr McGann, Progressive Orthodontics, USA

Dr McGann

Owing to popular demand, global orthodontics education provider Progressive Orthodontics has announced the re-opening of its Singapore location in 2009. The two-year Orthodontics class, run by Dr Oliver Henneidge and his wife Irene Henneidge, will begin on 15 January 2009 with the closing date for discounts for early registration by December 2008, company officials told *Dental Tribune*. We spoke with Dr McGann, dentist and founder of the company, about his concept of orthodontic education and what participants can expect from these courses.

**Dr McGann, what are the shortfalls of orthodox education nowadays?**

The programmes outside of the universities are too short to learn comprehensive orthodontics. With only 48 days, the program I designed is the longest, but I consider this a minimum for orthodontic education.

Then there is the problem of educators not being practical, showing only their best cases, or even just the best portions of a case. The trusting dentist returns to their practice, applies the incomplete information to a trusting patient, and has less than expected results.

But not all is the fault of the educator, as every student is in control of his or her destiny. For a dentist to start and finish an orthodontic case successfully in the beginning of their career, they need help from someone with experience. We feel it is our responsibility as educators to offer help and experience. We therefore spend most of our time outside the classroom giving support for students and graduates in a centralised location. The dentist studies at home, comes to the live seminar, then goes back and studies some more.

Both ways work from an education viewpoint. The IAT student is usually academically better at the end than the live seminar student, while the live seminar student is better at diagnosis and the technical aspect. The most diligent student takes both programmes: the live seminars and the internet study. We do not charge extra for any of our seminars and students pay only once in their life. If they are great at ortho, our programme gets a good reputation, and that is how we want it.

**What are the latest trends in orthodontics, and how does your programme reflect these trends?**

First of all, I believe I have developed the most accurate, most diagnostic system in orthodontics today, and that includes the specialty. I developed computer software over a ten-year period that allows you to know where you are going with each diagnosis before you start the case. I have created template treatment plans that enable dentists to write the most effective treatment plan for treatment on a case-by-case basis.

I do not know of an actual ‘trend’ in the profession to technology-driven diagnosis and treatment, but we have it. I view the trend in the specialty as staying the same, it is ‘good enough’, which to me is not good enough when there is something better. I have eliminated the guesswork from diagnosis, removing bad diagnosis from the clinic. This is one reason that our orthodontic system works so smoothly in the computer, and IAT student is better at diagnosis and treatment planning, while the live seminar student is better at treatment planning.

**You also offer an Internet Assisted Training (IAT) programme. How does that work, and how does it compare to the live seminar series?**

With today’s technology, case histories and textbook information can be viewed over the internet in the comfort of every home in the world. There are about 500 documented case histories that have been loaded onto our website for others to review and learn by.

The review of those cases can be done more effectively at home than in a seminar setting, assuming the dentist is very disciplined. The dentist controls how fast they learn, and of course, there is less time taken away from the practice with IAT training. But there will always be hands-on, look-over-the-shoulder type of education that is needed in orthodontics. We accomplish this in three seminars.

I solved with the development of the individual patient appliance. You need more education, a computer, and today’s shipping to do the work. Five years and 100,000+ cases say it works, and it does. The difference is like driving a bicycle or driving a nice car. The job is done more efficiently, as in less doctor time, and with better treatment results.

**You are offering CE programmes to dentists in Singapore again in 2009. What has driven this decision?**

We had a very respectable response in orthodontic training in Singapore for many years, teaching the straight archwire appliance and no computer software used for diagnosis. But when the change was made to individual patient orthodontics, which requires a change in materials and learning computer software, we found resistance in that market. Progressive Orthodontics will only teach the way we believe is the best for the student and the treatment if they can be open enough to learn some computer software, how to diagnose a customised fixed appliance, and the many advanced methods that I have developed for treatment. This includes skeletal anchor, corticotomy, and orthodontics without the need for orthognathic surgery.

**Where in the Asia Pacific region will you offer additional courses?**

We want to spread quality, comprehensive orthodontics, to help general practitioners around the world. We are interested in teaching in any location that can gather a group of enthusiastic dentists of sufficient class size to make the business aspect work. But we cannot service every city and town in the world. We only have 50 instructors, so regional education is the answer.

Singapore will be the centre for the Asian region, and we will be offering our complete live series in Singapore. Many other Asian students also choose to learn through our IAT concept, and in this way limit geographical concerns. In the future, based on demand, we are looking at possible Asian-based IAT courses or potentially live locations, where demand justifies the expense.

**Countries like China or India are fast developing markets. In the future, are you planning to offer your courses there as well?**

I believe China and India have the potential to be very good markets for our courses in the future. There is a large population, and they appear to have the desire to improve their skills. As the economies in these countries continue to develop, I believe that a significant portion...
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tion of the population will begin to be able to afford orthodontic care, and then the demand will start a class in a more convenient location in the future, this graduate has the ability to retake the seminars in this location free of charge.

I am always happy to share knowledge with anyone that wishes to learn and apply what I already know. It makes me feel good to see and feel their success. I have devoted my life to creating knowledge and sharing it with other dentists for a more enjoyable and profitable professional life. Our dentists then improve the lives of patients that may not have otherwise had access to orthodontic care. This is truly rewarding as a look back on my life.

Thank you very much for the interview.

China investment breaks record

BEIJING and SHANGHAI, China: Venture capitalists continue to invest in Mainland China with US$964 million put into 59 deals during the third quarter, up 22 per cent from the US$790 million invested in 75 deals during the same period last year, according to new regional statistics from Dow Jones VentureSource. Through the first nine months of 2008, China-based companies have raised US$3.29 billion in venture capital, more than the previous annual record of US$2.88 billion set in 2001.

“It’s clear that venture capital investors are still eager to put money into this emerging marketplace and, in many areas, they’ve actually accelerated the pace of their investments,” said Jessica Canning, Global Research Director for Dow Jones VentureSource. “Already this year, the Business and Financial Services, Consumer Goods and Consumer Services industries—three areas closely tied to emerging economies due to their focus on retail, manufacturing, media and advertising—have set annual investment records.”

Specifically, Dow Jones VentureSource found that China’s Consumer Services industry accounted for US$267 million in investment with nine deals completed in the third quarter, up 57 per cent from the US$170 million put into 15 deals during the same period last year. Overall, through the first nine months of 2008, the industry has seen a record US$731 million invested in 37 deals. Within Consumer Services, US$143 million was invested in four deals for retail companies in the third quarter.

“Larger deals drove investment in the third quarter as the median size of a venture deal in China remained at $10 million, which is the highest on record and the most out of any region we track, including the US,” Ms Canning adds. “In the third quarter, we also saw the vast majority of deals and capital investments in China go to companies that are already generating revenues or are profitable.”

While the majority of capital, some US$864 million, went to companies that raised second or later-stage rounds, smaller early-stage deals were more prevalent. Seed and first rounds made up 65 per cent of all venture rounds in China during the third quarter, while second rounds made up 22 per cent of the deal count and later-stage rounds accounted for 15 per cent.