Asian Pacific region sees significant shift in attitudes towards braces

Whether because of advances in technology that have made today’s fixed orthodontic appliances smaller and more comfortable than ever or the vast array of colours orthodontic brackets and components are available in, dental braces are enjoying surprising popularity as a fashion craze in parts of Asia. The phenomenon of fashion braces serves no medical purpose first and foremost, not because they are fitted by a trained professional—which is not always the case, seeing as many dentists are simply refus-
ing to do so, given the lack of medical purpose—the trend is a dangerous one to follow, experts caution. For example, the use of unsterilised equipment or sub-
standard adhesives could cause infections and illness. Further-
more, fake braces expose their wearers to the same risks as that of actual fixed orthodontic appli-
cances. According to Dr Hok Sim Kor, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry at Phenom Penh Inter-
national University, wearers with poor oral hygiene run the risk of demineralisation of the teeth, tooth decay or periodontal dis-
ease. Moreover, just like actual fixed orthodontic appliances, fashion braces may move well-
aligned teeth into the wrong posi-
tion without regular adjustment or check-ups.

Aussie kids excited about fixed orthodontic appliances

Further to the south, in Aus-
tralia, braces may not be con-
sidered a fashion statement yet; however, attitudes towards ortho-
dontic treatment have shifted similarly over the past several years. A recent study conducted by the Australian Society of Ortho-
dontists has found that seven in 
ten children responded with hap-
piness or excitement upon hear-
ing that they needed treatment with fixed orthodontic appli-
cances. Moreover, nine in ten of the specialist orthodontists surveyed said that they had witnessed a child become visibly upsset when told he or she did not need such treatment.

According to society spokes-
person and practising orthodon-
tist Dr David Mastroianni, these findings reflect patients’ shifting opinions in Australia. “The indus-
try has observed a shift in atti-
dues towards braces and ortho-
dontic treatment first hand. We
now have children coming in for consultations, not because they’ve been referred by their dentist, but because the child wants braces,” he remarked. “With advances in tech-
nology, braces today are not only small and comfortable, but offer coloured or glow-in-the-dark op-
tions to personalise their look.”

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