Taking care of business

Sameer Patel explains the benefits that orthodontics can offer GDPs and their patients.

Consider who you want to target and then form an effective marketing plan.

It is sad but true that many adults spend their entire lives covering their mouths when they laugh, smile or talk. They feel stuck because they do not want to wear metal braces for years or they are concerned that other corrective procedures could be too invasive or too expensive.

Here at Elleven we have doubled our orthodontic referral base of dentists in the last few years. Practices refer patients for orthodontic treatment as well as planning restorative cases with pre-restorative orthodontics and with the new-age GDP orthodontics such as Invisalign, Inman Aligner and Six Month Smiles.

You do not need to be an orthodontist to help your patients achieve straighter teeth but it is worth creating a relationship with specialists. Take good records and share them with your specialist colleagues.

Systems overview

So, what does making orthodontic treatment part of your practice's offering mean? To make the most of the prospects orthodontics can offer, you need to understand but look beyond traditional braces. Modern orthodontics delivers new options for patients from all walks of life, young and old, who, perhaps, are limited financially and want fast results.

There are several good systems suitable for use by the GDP following appropriate instruction. There are nearly invisible, removable aligners, such as Invisalign, that get changed every two weeks, allowing the teeth to shift gradually until the prescribed, desired result is achieved. This method eliminates metal wires and brackets, mouth abrasions, and what patients imagine will be painful, lengthy sessions in the orthodontist's chair.

There are also systems like Six Months Smiles that offer a discreet way to straighten the front six teeth in about six months. It serves to meet patient expectations by targeting those key, prominent teeth that are displayed most noticeably when they flash a smile.

It must be clear to GDPs that these solutions have limitations and one must always start with simple cases. Like all our work, we have an armamentarium of options in all of our treatment modalities - always choose the right one for the patient.

Marketing

An orthodontic offering is only going to benefit patients and the practice if people know about it. This is where marketing is important. Consider who you want to target and what you want to achieve before devising a plan.

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Marketing is also important within the practice, and the waiting room is the ideal place in which to make sure patients are aware of the full service offering. Regularly change the leaflets and posters in your waiting room to reflect new treatments, advances in technology, any promotions, and so on.

Once you are up and running, your best marketing tools are your patients. With this in mind, why not produce a card to be handed out by your patients to their friends or loved ones for a complimentary consultation?

These are just a few ideas for promoting the treatments available from the practice. Truly, the ways in which you can market your chosen orthodontic system(s) are many and varied, so don't be afraid to be inventive.

As we say at Elleven, 'Seek excellence and the rest will follow'. The 'rest' encompasses happy patients, job satisfaction and a flourishing business. Elleven is proof that an orthodontic offering can help to deliver all of this; with much to gain, make sure you explore the options so that you don't miss out.

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