

Relative Awareness and Need of Dental Implant Treatment as applicable to Indian circumstances: An Overview

Sir,

This is now a well known fact that the psychosomatic reactions of patients to loss of their teeth generated only little concern in the past. Though, in this modern era, artificial replacement of missing teeth with dental implants have been increasingly common and widely accepted option which often been referred as an affirmative experience by patients with regards to function, cosmetic and psychological aspects.^[1] Undoubtedly, dental implant replacement therapy render fabrication of implant supported or retained prosthesis with excellent prognosis even in the compromised bony conditions where typical removable or fixed prosthesis fails. On an average number of dental implants inserted annually world-wide has been estimated to be approximately 1 million. Much work has been done on the clinical aspects of tooth replacement using various implant systems, but there have been few studies addressing their long-term prognostic assessments and patient's attitudes to this alternative treatment.^[2]

A study in the United States showed that 77% of those questioned knew about dental implants; however, their chief source of information was the print as well electronic media and not their dentists.^[3] Watzek *et al.* in 2003 reported mass media (periodicals and television) as the main sources of mostly negative information about dental implants. This actually generates a potential need for dental professionals to know whether patients feel adequately informed and whether what they know reflects reality.^[4] Awareness of what patients know about implants can help to match consumer expectations with what can realistically be achieved to ward off a negative image of implant dentists caused by a communications gap and by consumer discontent. It is therefore essential for the dental education system and the governing bodies to create

awareness public awareness of implants, sources of information about implants and understanding of oral implants as a treatment option. Because most of the studies in this perspective have not been done in India, our recommendations are to promote further detailed surveys in both urban and rural populations to learn more about dental implant awareness among the Indian provinces and to further help create a better awareness of this treatment modality and its benefits.

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