

Implants and Conventional Prosthodontics: Friends or Enemies?

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Dental implants are often used as part of prosthodontic treatment for patients with simple and complex needs. For decades, implants have been used as alternatives to conventional prosthodontic treatment and also in conjunction with this treatment. Fundamental anatomic and physiologic differences exist where implants are thought to be augmentive or substantive support giving rise to pursuing outcome-based evidence for their use in prosthodontic intervention.

Extended use of dental implants in fixed, removable and maxillofacial prosthodontics have more reported outcomes and will continue to become important in ranking quality of life improvement. Further use of implants in developing patients, the elderly and periodontally compromised patients serve these populations well. Care must be taken to insure that structured treatment accompanies case specific circumstances.

The development of materials in dentistry has taken on a renaissance in the last decade, where computer aided designed alloys and ceramics have predominated. Although material consideration is important for understanding construction requirements, thorough diagnosis and design principles will also take some consideration. Patients requiring full or partial arch prosthesis replacement of a dentition can be treated in a variety of pathways. The primary diagnostic sequences should give a general vision of patient expectations, available anatomy, interarch distances, and biomechanical design. The synergistic use of three dimensional imaging and virtual software planning has helped achieve advanced concepts in treatment that will continue to be surveyed for favorable patient outcomes.