

# Guest Editorial

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## Clinical Research—Is It relevant to Dental Practice?

Today, both at meetings and in journals, there is an increasing interest and emphasis on establishing clinical practice on the basis of research. But yet, as an example, at a recent Academy of Osseointegration retreat to review treatments to restore the edentulous maxilla, no consensus could be reached. The only agreement was that there was insufficient scientific evidence to support any treatment modality. But... there are patients in our waiting rooms who require treatment. What should be the strategy of the conscientious practitioner? Another example is the statement, from a main podium presentation, that there is a superior fit of zirconia long-span restorations. This was claimed to have been reported in a recent paper in the Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry. In fact, the paper did not evaluate passive seating of the zirconia restoration at all.

Perhaps the 'best fit' to address this problem lies somewhere in the middle—a combination of science and clinical experience. As the thoughtful clinician recognizes, there are few hard and fast rules in clinical dentistry. A conservative approach where the clinician relies on clinical experience, with an honest appraisal of their clinical skills, combined with academic knowledge from meetings, study clubs and review of one or two journals a month may be good strategy. Today in the internet age, there are a wide variety of online courses and webinars from reputable clinician educators. Quality journals, such as JADA, Quintessence International, General Dentistry and Compendium that cover the spectrum of general practice, are easy to review.

Each practitioner must choose a strategy with which they are comfortable. Remember, at the end of the day, we the clinical dentists are the caregivers to whom our patients have entrusted themselves. We are the decision makers of our practices. We ethically and morally must provide professional care using practical means to the best of our abilities and with the cooperation of the patient. In this manner, we can continue to provide excellent care and enhance the oral health of our patients.



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