

Increasing Implant Case Acceptance

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Here are two questions that every implant doctor needs to answer:

Does a high implant case acceptance rate mean I am successful?

The answer may surprise you. The truth is that a majority of doctors may only be presenting to highly motivated patients. Over the years, Levin Group has discovered that many implant doctors pre-screen their patients and decide against presenting to less likely prospects for various reasons. In other words, the majority of patients who could have benefited from implants were not hearing about them. Your percentage rate of patients accepting treatment may be high, but you may not be presenting to every patient you should.

Do a large number of my patients turn down implant treatment?

This is often the case when prospective patients receive only a cursory explanation that does not address the critical patient benefits. For patients to agree to implant treatment, case presentations must heavily emphasize patient benefits.

Therefore, doctors trying to grow their implant practices should keep two things in mind:

1. Presume That Patients Do *Not* Know About Implants

Approximately 60% of all dentists do not restore a single implant case in any given year. That means that about 60% of the patients never hear about dental implants from their dentist. There is no media blitz about implants to expose patients to the benefits like there has been about whitening.

If they don't hear about implants from their doctor, they typically don't hear about implants.

In our consulting experience, Levin Group has found that patients who hear of implants (even before they need them) often develop an interest and are motivated to learn more. Clearly, the first steps to implant case acceptance are simply *awareness* and *education*.

Patient education is not a simple process. Patients' incomplete knowledge of implants makes it difficult for them to decide how appropriate implants may be. Keep in mind that a person who has never had implants cannot easily comprehend or appreciate the tremendous benefits. Systematic education is critical to implant case acceptance.

During case presentation, concentrate on patient benefit statements. Knowing so little about implants, patients will find most or all of the following statements to be revelations. For example:

- “When you get an implant, you’ll notice improved confidence as your smile once again becomes full.”
- “Implants allow you to regain so much of your former, active lifestyle.”
- “No more food restrictions will exist for you! You can bite into a crunchy apple, chew your foods easier and avoid uncomfortable digestive problems.”
- “Future bone loss from dentures will no longer occur when you have implants.”
- “No longer will denture wearers suffer from the inconvenience of adhesives or the embarrassing problem of dentures insecurely shifting around in their mouth.”
- “Do you find yourself unable to speak clearly or easily with dentures? Implants will restore your former expressive speech.”
- “There is no extra work involved for you to care for your implants. Regular brushing and flossing along with routine dental examinations are all you need.”
- “Implants have superior success rates.”

2. Every patient is a potential implant candidate

Implants are successful more than 95% of the time—how many surgical procedures can offer the same success rate? It is even more remarkable that this astonishing success rate is infrequently communicated to patients.

Although not every patient needs implants right now, every single patient should be made aware of implants. Therefore, dentists have an obligation to educate all patients about this treatment option. Avoid screening patients based on your perception of *their* interest level or ability to pay.

Another way to gauge the importance of educating patients is to put yourself in their place. If you were missing a tooth, what option would you choose? Would you choose a bridge, knowing it is inferior to an implant? Of course not. Therefore, if your patients are missing a tooth, shouldn't they know everything possible about the best treatment option?

Your belief in (and passion for) implants should come across in *every* case presentation. Your enthusiasm for implants serves to inspire patients. When you emphasize the patient benefits of implants in your presentations, treatment acceptance invariably increases. Many dentists feel that they should simply mention options, and the patient will make the best choice. In reality, it is important to realize that successfully presenting implant cases depends on two components: patient education and motivation. The doctor is the key to providing both of these.

Conclusion

Case acceptance for implants starts by educating all patients about implants, even before there is a need. Practices must also present to many patients, not simply those who are already receptive. Make every effort to understand what motivates people and gear case presentations accordingly. Practices that do this will be the leaders in implant dentistry.

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