

CHANGING FACE OF DENTISTRY

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Dentistry has undergone a sea of changes since the time mankind realized the importance of teeth. The changes are not just seen in materials, techniques and armamentarium but also in the attitude of students, teachers; even the patients are not left. Presently the M.M. House classification of patients falls short to describe the patients of 21st century. Demands of the patients have been shifted from more of the function to function and esthetics. The challenge for general practitioners is that for the most part, patients are unaware of what's really going on in their mouths, and most of the practitioners have anxiety about how much to tell the patient because as we go on to specialized dentistry, it will add to the cost of treatment for the patient. The majority of dentists have moved along with the wave of changes in techniques and materials; some have assimilated new technologies into their practices. The risk comes when a dentist starts to believe that technology is the solution to their problems. However it is the basic knowledge & skill of the dentist that treats the patient. Newer technologies and materials just allow us to deliver dentistry in a different and efficient ways to provide more reliable, cost effective treatment with superior results. Few dentists now a days, run into "What's new" trends because they don't want to be left behind others in the field. But sometimes the newer things are, in fact, at par or inferior to earlier time tested materials and techniques. There is no question: some products improve, but it is also true that some don't. Obviously with the scientific advancement in materials & techniques, products and treatment outcome improve, but this is not always true as a rule. Green dentistry, Shortened dental arch, Flexible dentures, Lasers in dentistry, Adhesive dentistry, Nanotechnology, Digital imaging, CBCT, Micro CT, CAD-CAM techniques, Cryosurgery, Rotary endodontics are such modern concepts which were tested, subsequently implemented and are now frequently utilized in clinical practice. To select

the appropriate one for specific situation, the clinician is the best judge; who evaluates its utility with proper explanation. These clinicians are trained in various Dental colleges. Which too have experienced a change in teaching methodology & contents to keep pace with the changing the world. Greater patient awareness due to easy transfer of knowledge & communication and better financial status of society have led to increase in demand of trained dental professionals and the number of dental colleges that too equipped with the present scenario in terms of quality of education & technology. In past two decades, the approach of having certain definite number of professionals per definite number of population have led to schemes of opening more dental colleges in government as well as private sectors. The privatization of education has led to unbelievable rise in cost of education which is born because of strict rules & requirements of various regulatory bodies. This has culminated into education being opted by those who have ample of money irrespective of having brain to be dedicated to these specific and highly disciplined area of education. Further to educate child after passing intermediate especially the girls, parent see dentistry as a favorable option to get her married decently. Hence the dentistry is more being opted not as a dreamed profession but like a dowry qualification or something to continue the education for a little more period of time as one can not marry in such a young age after passing intermediate. Gradually this mind set of parents translate into attitude of their wards admitted into the dental colleges for education. Who at times becomes least dedicated towards the studies. Instead of dentistry as his/her choice, he gets it out of compulsion of family and hence does not involve in it completely. The story repeats in the post graduation also. Result, the upcoming generation of dentists is generally not being upto the mark, leaving few exceptions. There is a need

to understand the consequence of opening so many dental colleges which were thought as a need to uplift the profession of dentistry and fulfill the community needs. But the number of dentists is on the rise, who do not adequately possess knowledge, skill or dedication required for this noble profession of a Doctor.

Let us think & if possible, act accordingly.

