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ACTUAL ARTICLE WITH IDENTIFYING INFORMATION CHANGED

Dr. James. H. Smith: Advocate for Safer, More Effective Root Canal Therapy

James H. Smith, DDS, is an enthusiastic advocate for LightSpeed LSX™ and EndoVac® technologies, which have dramatically increased dentists' ability to clean root canals to full working length, preserve more healthy tissue, and irrigate and sterilize the entire root canal system with unprecedented safety and effectiveness.

James. H. Smith, DDS, is passionate about practicing endodontics: "I like the predictability of it. I like the fact that our success rate can be so high. Saving teeth is an extremely great service to provide for a patient, and that's what attracted me to endodontics – the ability to save teeth and keep people healthy."

Root canal therapy is one of the ways Dr. Smith saves teeth and keeps his patients healthy, and it's one of the most common procedures endodontists perform. For many years, hand-held instruments have been used to remove a diseased or inflamed pulp. Although these instruments can provide good results in the hands of a skilled dentist, they have limitations in how thoroughly they can remove tissue.

In the mid 1990s, tapered nickel-titanium rotary instruments became the state-of-the-art for performing root canal therapy. As with hand-held instruments, they provide

good results in the hands of a skilled dentist but, as with hand-held instruments, they still don't allow adequate cleaning of the root canal system. “The other limitation,” adds Dr. Smith, “is that they're tapered, so they tend to take a bulk of tooth structure away coronally, therefore weakening the tooth and predisposing it to possible fracture.

“Another downside of tapered files is that you lose tactile sensation, so you can't feel where you are in the canal – what part of the instrument is actually cutting?”

A major problem with those tapered nickel-titanium rotary instruments was that they broke off in root canals quite frequently: "I would ask an endodontic colleague of mine using those earlier systems about *file separation*, and he would say that an instrument would break off about once a month, which was totally unacceptable to me as an endodontist."

Dr. Smith says tapered nickel-titanium rotary instruments have gotten better in the last fifteen years; however, they are still prone to fracture and they still do not clean the root canal system adequately, especially the apical three to four millimeters – the bottom part of the root.

LIGHTSPEED LSX™

Dr. Smith remained skeptical of the rotary technology until he heard about LightSpeed instrumentation at an endodontic convention in 1999.

He says LightSpeed instruments, which are distributed by Discus Dental, Inc., address three important aspects of performing root canal therapy that other nickel-

titanium rotary instruments do not. First, all of the cutting is done at the tip of the instrument so when the dentist is in the root canal system, his or her tactile sensation is even greater than with hand-held instruments. Second, the instruments aren't tapered, which preserves more healthy tooth structure in the coronal area. Third, LightSpeed instruments allow for cleaning more thoroughly through the entire length of the root canal system. In addition, the design of LightSpeed instruments makes them more resistant to separation.

“I’ve done about seven thousand cases using LightSpeed,” says Dr. Smith, "and I've had outstanding results."

ENDOVAC®

As important an advancement as LightSpeed is in enabling endodontists to perform better root canal procedures, it addresses only part of the process; once the diseased or inflamed tissue is removed, the entire root canal system must then be irrigated to flush out bacteria and debris and to sterilize the system before sealing.

The standard method has been to irrigate the root canal system with sodium hypochlorite. In order to get sodium hypochlorite into the root canal system, most dentists inject it into the tooth with positive pressure. This action is problematic. First, the sodium hypochlorite doesn't reach the full length of the root canal system. Second, positive pressure irrigation raises the risk of a sodium hypochlorite accident. This would entail sodium hypochlorite leaving the root canal and entering the surrounding tissue

area, where the highly caustic chemical can react violently with tissue in the maxillofacial area.

This irrigation method became obsolete when Discus Dental's EndoVac® True Apical Negative Pressure Irrigation System entered the market. Dr. Smith says this revolutionary technology impressed him as much, if not more, than the LightSpeed technology.

"The EndoVac system is a groundbreaking technological advance in endodontics and, in my opinion, the greatest thing to hit endodontics within the last ten years," states Dr. Smith. "Using sodium hypochlorite full strength and getting it safely to working length is the most effective way to clean the root canal system, and the only way to do that that I know of is with the EndoVac system."

Dr. Smith cites one recent study out of India showing 99% to 99.5% cleanliness of all root canals cleaned using LightSpeed and EndoVac, whereas the older techniques are cleaning canals perhaps 20% of the time. "It's quite an advancement," he says, "and in my own practice, I find our success rates are much better than they used to be – and they were pretty good *before* we used EndoVac. The results I'm seeing clinically are just fantastic."

CONVERTING COLLEAGUES

It would seem logical that dentists across the country would be eager to incorporate such revolutionary technologies as LightSpeed and EndoVac into their

practices; however, Dr. Smith says many practitioners are very attached to the older technologies they've used for years, and they're reluctant to change.

When Discus Dental asked Dr. Smith to lecture about LightSpeed and EndoVac, he saw it as the perfect opportunity to share his enthusiasm for these remarkable advancements with his dental colleagues directly and demonstrate to them the benefits of adopting these superior technologies. “I've been lecturing nationwide for the last year and a half," he says, "giving seven-hour CE credits on how to use these technologies because I am passionate about the fact that they are cleaning and instrumenting root canals better than any other systems out there."

In October 2008, Dr. Smith was invited to lecture at the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine.

“Author Ayn Rand said, ‘The hardest thing to explain is the glaringly evident which everybody had decided not to see.’ To me, it's amazing that awareness of the benefits of using LightSpeed and EndoVac isn't more widespread. I'm trying to change that by lecturing for Discus Dental.

“I’ve also been sanctioned by the State of New Jersey to give one CE credit, so I do a lot of *Lunch and Learns*. I’ll spend a lunch hour with a general dentist, going over the highlights of what I do in my seven-hour CE course, but I'll do that hands-on in their dental office. There's no charge for it; it's just a way for me to show dentists why I think the technique I'm using is the best way to do root canals.”

WHAT SETS THEM APART

Dr. Smith and his associates, Cynthia Brooks, DDS, and Maria Link, DDS, have two offices: one in Brooklyn, New York and another in Paris Lake, New Jersey. Both offices distinguish themselves from other endodontic offices in the level of service patients receive. "Our first priority is to make the patient feel comfortable and address all their concerns, including assuring them their treatment will be pain free," says Dr. Smith. "Payment options are discussed in detail and every insurance is contacted so that we may relay coverage to the patient, relieving them of that burden.

"We follow up with their physicians to insure there are no contraindications to treatment. This way, when the patient gets into our office, they're relaxed and ready to go. The extra time spent prior to a patient’s visit is something we believe is very special and unique to our practice."

What separates their practice most distinctly from those of both general dentists and other endodontists, though, is their use of LightSpeed instrumentation and the EndoVac Irrigation System; however, those are only two examples of the advanced technology utilized to treat patients.

"We see every patient under a Zeiss™ surgical operating microscope – the best microscopes in the world," states Dr. Smith. "We have virtually silent electric handpieces that work with minimum vibration and allow us to access most porcelain-fused-to-metal crowns with no porcelain fracture; piezoelectric ultrasonics with diamond-coated tips; and digital radiography. Basically, anything that's technologically advanced in endodontics we have and we use. I'm not sure that every endodontist offers that."

Dr. Smith says his passion for state-of-the-art technology such as LightSpeed and EndoVac is rooted in the tremendous benefits they offer to his patients. “If you've ever seen a nine-year-old child in your office in agony because of a poor root canal that was done, it's heartbreaking,” states Dr. Smith, "and that’s something I would like to see limited in the future. With LightSpeed and EndoVac, we feel we are doing the best endodontics around."

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James H. Smith, DDS, received his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Howard University College of Dentistry in Washington, DC, where he also completed his residency training in Endodontics. He is board-certified by the American Board of Endodontics and is a member of the American Association of Endodontists, American Dental Association, New York State Dental Association, and the New Jersey Dental Association.

The Offices of Smith Endodontics and Contemporary Endodontics have two locations: 123 Maple Lane, Brooklyn, NY 10035, and 321 Oak Drive, Paris Lake, NJ 06499. Call the New York office at (845) 555-2334 or the New Jersey office at (201) 555-4997. For more information, visit www.websitehere.com.