

Short-term cosmetic orthodontics for general dental practitioners

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The demand for cosmetic dental treatments in the UK has grown dramatically in the last decade possibly due to increased public awareness of new techniques coupled with greater media attention for celebrities following smile enhancement treatments. In view of this, the aim of this article and the associated presentation at the 2013 British Dental Conference and Exhibition is to provide an overview of short-term cosmetic orthodontics for general dental practitioners. The presentation will cover the differences between short-term cosmetic orthodontics and comprehensive orthodontic treatment, and explain how using short-term orthodontics can be an effective tool to deliver minimally invasive cosmetic dentistry.

The demand for cosmetic dental treatments in the UK has grown dramatically in the last decade due to increasing public awareness of techniques available to enhance smiles and the media drawing attention to celebrities, such as Cheryl Cole who has had cosmetic smile enhancement treatments. An attractive smile has been shown to increase a person's confidence, improve their career prospects and ability to find a partner.

In recent years there has been a significant increase in general dentists using orthodontic appliances to assist them in treating patients who are unhappy with their smiles due to malaligned anterior teeth in relatively short timeframes of weeks or months.

Typically, these patients have only had two options in the past:

1. Traditional comprehensive orthodontic treatment

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Dr Maini was one of the first UK dentists to become a Six Month Smiles[®] provider and has been actively helping other dentists around the world learn and become more proficient with the system.

2. Restorative correction of malalignment using ceramic restorations.

PROVIDING A CHOICE

Most adult patients do not pursue comprehensive orthodontics, even though it is the gold standard, since they are not prepared to wear fixed appliances for years. They are only seeking correction to their crooked smiles and are not driven by correction of any posterior malocclusions.

In most cases, preparing teeth for ceramic restorations leads to aggressive removal of tooth structure which has a negative, long-term impact on the biomechanics of the tooth and the risks of pulpal damage. This is an option that many patients avoid due to the high

costs and long-term irreversible damage to their teeth.

Therefore many of these adult patients would have had no realistic treatment options available to them. However, short-term orthodontics is an option for many of these patients by using aesthetic appliances over short time frames where the focus of movements are only on those teeth that show in the smile rather make corrections to the posterior occlusion. From experience, most adult patients will tolerate orthodontics provided the treatment is less than nine months.

Combining simple tooth alignment techniques with tooth whitening and incisal composite edge bonding techniques or non-preparation veneers allows general dentists to radically improve the symmetry and aesthetics of a smile in a