

What a difference six months makes

Irish Dentistry was at the first Six Month Smiles seminar to be held in Ireland. We report back from the straight talking seminar



A new addition to general dentists' cosmetic toolkit went down a storm when it was introduced to Irish dentists last month.

The inaugural Six Month Smiles seminar ushered more than 70 people through the doors of the Pillo Hotel in Ashbourne, just a few miles out of Dublin. Held over two days, it gave dentists a taste of the short-term orthodontic system and explained the difference it could make to practices and patients alike.

Addressing the crowd, course instructor Dr Anoop Maini – a successful cosmetic dentist based in London, and an early Six Month Smiles adopter – explained why he found cosmetic dentistry so rewarding.

'Doing work at the front of the mouth changes lives,' he said. 'Patients don't buy veneers, or braces. They buy outcomes. That's where they see the value.'

'Six Month Smiles is a tool to help with that. It gives us an alternative to cutting teeth for patients who want to improve their smile, but who don't want comprehensive orthodontics.'

He was quick to explain how the technique fitted in to general dentistry, explaining: 'I'm like you. I'm a general dentist – I'm not an orthodontist. It's



not about teaching you to become an orthodontist, either.

'I was worried about upsetting my orthodontist when I started offering this, but if anything I now refer more to them than I ever did.'

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

Six Month Smiles is a cosmetically-focused adult orthodontic treatment performed in less than nine months with short term orthodontic-specific brackets and wires.

It's so-called because most cases are resolved in six months. The brackets and wires are clear, and designed specifically for use by general dental practitioners.

Dr Maini was very clear about the limitations of the system, explaining: 'It's not a complete replacement for traditional comprehensive orthodontics.'

'The goal of Six Month Smiles is to correct the patient's chief cosmetic complaint and give them a pleasing, symmetrical smile in less than nine months. The goal of traditional orthodontics is an ideal finish.'

'The two main reasons that adults don't want comprehensive orthodontics are the issues over time and cosmetics – doesn't it make sense to provide a safe and reasonable alternative for adults who don't want traditional orthodontics?'

'We're not taking patients away from traditional orthodontics. You will still offer it to them, but ultimately these are patients who don't want that treatment.'

COMPREHENSIVE SCHEDULE

Over the two days of the course, Dr Maini covered a wide range of topics, from the philosophy of the system and getting started



with implementing it into practices, to the fine clinical detail of Six Month Smiles itself.

The technique, explained Dr Maini, concerns itself only with the front teeth – it effectively does the first stage of traditional comprehensive orthodontics.

The key differences are that Six Month Smiles won't change angle class, buccolingual root positions, or correct significant midline deviations.

The technique involves light forces being placed over short periods of time, which – according to current thinking – should mean less chance of root resorption.

THE BEST POLICY

Dr Maini's honest, enthusiastic approach left its mark on his audience, and he capped off the seminar with a few essential tips that summed up his practical take on the system.

'Be honest with your patients about their expectations, and communicate clearly with them. Make sure they understand you aren't there to change their bite. Only treat the cases you feel comfortable with.'

'Six Month Smiles is all about the patient. It allows for minimally invasive cosmetic dentistry for patients who aren't looking for perfect results – and that's a great thing for them and you.' **ID**

IN BRIEF: SIX MONTH SMILES

- Rounds out the arches
- Levels and aligns arches
- Straightens teeth/corrects crowding
- Closes spaces
- Upright flared and tipped teeth
- Levels gingival margins
- Increases symmetry

For more information on Six Month Smiles, visit www.6monthsmiles.com.