



## Prosthodontics Unlimited

Prosthodontics is defined as the branch of dentistry pertaining to the restoration and maintenance of oral function, comfort, appearance and health of the patient by restoration of natural teeth and/or replacement of missing teeth and craniofacial tissues with artificial substitute (GPT-7).

Thus, a prosthodontist has to keep pace with developments in all phases of prosthetic and restorative dentistry. Today the many treatment options are available but all modalities have one goal. "optimization of function, esthetics and patient satisfaction."

From conventional treatment option such as removable to fixed prosthodontics or replacement with third dentition - "implants", the purpose is to deliver a functional restoration, i.e., biological unit of stomatognathic system.

Prosthodontic interface plays a major role in the success of restoration. There is a need to address the soft tissue. The techniques that are followed for tooth preparation, impression or jaw relation are reflected on the health of soft tissue. The tooth restorative interface has the effect on gingival health of the surrounding tissues. Tooth restoration, soft tissue interface, tooth cement, cement to restoration interface as well as the implant bone, implant abutment and restoration interfaces signify the successful functional survival of restorations in the oral cavity. Unlimited is the scope of the areas to be addressed for restoration of tooth as a functional biological unit of the stomatognathic system. Prosthesis is not a lone entity but it should have a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding soft tissue, adjacent and opposing teeth. That is, it has to smoothly merge as a part of stomatognathic system. Hence, it is important to start with end in mind. Visualize the prognosis of the treatment in its final envi-

ronment.

Biologic restorations not only mimic the missing part of the oral structures but are also biofunctional. Hence, prosthodontics involves more than what is given in the definition. It is not just the face value but the underlying meaning in the definition is of significance. Thus, a prosthodontist has unlimited task to perform - address the soft and hard tissues, maintain and treat the existing structures in the oral cavity, plan for the optimum occlusal scheme and restore form, function and esthetics of mixing parts. Prosthesis may not be a living entity but it should be a functional entity. Turning technology to functional reality is "smart prosthodontics".

"Smart prosthodontics" demands the restoration to be non-parasitic, inconsequential and add value existing health of stomatognathic system. In fact, restorative practice is married to the patient for lifetime.

"Boutique practice" may be the demand of the day but ultimately we would be spending a lot of time in correcting and patching up the periodontal collapse, occlusal errors and restorative failures.

A smart prosthodontist has to have an integrated approach with perio, operative and endo-restorative skills developed in him as prosthodontists address all the branches of dentistry.

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