

# Dr. Gordon Christensen: 'Intraoral video systems change practices'

*Dr. Gordon Christensen moderated a seminar entitled "Clinical Applications of an Intraoral Video Camera System," Nov. 29, at the Greater New York Dental Meeting. Speaking with Dr. Christensen were Drs. Ralph Duffin of Hemet, Calif., and Lynn Blaisdell of Boise, Idaho. Following are excerpts from Dr. Christensen's program.*

## **On Being Introduced to the Concept**

"When I saw the first intraoral video-camera system several years ago, I thought it was interesting. And although I was impressed, I was not convinced. I watched these systems evolve, and I started to use an intraoral camera in my practice as a diagnostic and treatment-planning aid. I ended up purchasing two of the systems. In other words, yes, it does work, and it does change practices.

"Our group of CRA evaluators found that intraoral video-camera systems provided unbelievable advantages in enhanced patient education, which resulted in significant increases in acceptance of treatment plans."

## **On Patient Acceptance**

"A patient can see his own intraoral conditions under magnification with better quality than the dentist could show him with a foggy mouth mirror. You know the delicate psychology of telling a patient he has a cracked tooth...he's probably thinking you need a new car.

"If a patient sees and understands what's happening, he wants treatment. If he can't see it, then the communication is all verbal, and you haven't established a rapport with him. You may call it justification of care, but when a person

sees what you are doing, he turns on.

"I was a disbeliever, but I'm not anymore. When they see it, they believe it."

## **On Enhanced Vision**

"Intraoral video cameras provide incomparable views of many areas of the mouth that are difficult, if not impossible, to see with conventional mouth mirrors. [In an endodontic exam] I can show an endo hole down to almost the apex. It's unbelievable what you can see and what it means to the patient as he looks down that hole with you, and he sees the challenges you're facing. If I place a periodontal probe down into a periodontal pocket, and I squeeze pus out of the hole, and the patient sees this procedure under magnification, it makes a real believer out of him."

## **On Documentation**

Attorneys tell me that this year one out of 10 dentists will be threatened with a lawsuit. Ten years ago that ratio was one out of 50 dentists. With the intraoral camera you can document procedures with still photos or videotapes."

## **On Competitive Products**

"We analyzed the Fuji DentaCam and other systems in our October '89 CRA Newsletter, and I've not seen significant changes that would alter that positive evaluation."

## **On Cost**

"In America, there are about 20 to 30 new patients per month in a typical general practice. Using an intraoral video camera on those new patients, I can assure you that you will pay for the monthly payment by the second or third patient. Leasing provides a way to spread the cost over time."



**Dr. Gordon Christensen: "Less than 10 percent of the products we evaluate hook me, and this concept has done so."**

## **On When to Buy**

"A common question I'm asked is, 'Should I wait to buy an intraoral video-camera system because it is evolving so fast?' And I would say no. These systems are evolving, but so are automobiles, and you don't wait to buy them. The current developmental stage of intraoral cameras is relatively stable. I would not wait to accept the concept."

## **On the Future**

"Contrary to my own early beliefs, there really is a need and a use for intraoral video-camera systems in dentistry. Less than 10 percent of the products we evaluate hook me, and this concept has done so. It's easy for me to talk about a concept when I believe in it, and this one has attracted and caught me.

"I see more and more dentists getting interested in this diagnostic concept, which is becoming more mandatory as our population ages. This is an educational tool that can aid in diagnosis better than anything I know."

*(The three clinicians in this seminar own Fuji DentaCam intraoral video-camera systems for their practices.)*