

Where Dentistry is Headed

Dear Readers,

The International Dental Show (IDS) 2015 in Cologne, Germany, closed its doors on March 25th as the world's leading trade fair for the dental industry. It was praised as a great success and the largest ever. More exhibitors (2,201), more visitors (138,500) from more countries (151) and more business were reported. It was said that dentistry has become an important promoter of business for Germany, and that the IDS drives the progress of dentistry with many innovations presented at the fair. Therefore, one could claim that what was shown or presented at the IDS could be used as a measurement tool to characterise where dentistry is heading. This motivated me to search press releases and reports about the IDS 2015 in the internet which were published in the week before and during the fair. I have organised the findings into tables with a hierarchy in which manufacturers/exhibitors are the first order and their products/services are the subcategories. Furthermore, I have dichotomised my table into 1) the use of the product for therapy of diseases in the oral cavity or 2) the prevention of these diseases.

Not excluding double entries in my tables, the great majority of fields were filled with procedures, products or services for delivering therapy by dentists or dental laboratories, which means that restorative therapy is the overweening focus of dentists and the dental industry. This year it was digital dentistry (scanners, digital workflow, milling and printing devices) that was the most reported. 85% of the fields were occupied by the equipment mentioned above and auxiliary devices for treatment,

such as billing programmes, dental units, sterilisation devices etc. The preventive side yielded about 20% of the lines, or 15% of the fields were occupied by preventive products/techniques. The most heavily promoted preventive items were consumer products such as electric toothbrushes or innovative methods to remove interdental biofilm. A few journals were mentioned which target dental professionals performing individual professional oral health maintenance, as well as some concepts on how to organise oral health care.

As a well-educated dentist, I know, based on science, that caries and periodontal diseases are mostly preventable, provided the right steps are taken and the profession is able to obtain the compliance of our patients. Hence, I must ask myself why society or our health care system is willing to spend that much money on 'curing' a preventable disease. We all know that even the most high-tech restorations only remove the symptoms of the disease, but do not eliminate its causes. With all the technology available these days, I am convinced that if industry, health care authorities and the dental profession formed an alliance to find better cures, causal cures, for the diseases we are fighting, in the long run we would see an orally healthy population and avoid much pain, stress and loss of quality of life without the requirement of much compliance on the part of our patients.

Dear readers, I implore you to think about these matters and help overcome dental/periodontal diseases!

Sincerely yours



Prof. J.-F. Roulet