Imaging implants beyond imagination

Imaging is rapidly evolving, and steadily moving towards the inner core of oral health care. Indeed, the introduction of three-dimensional (3D) imaging (cone beam computed tomography, facial 3D scans, digital impressions) and digital dentistry in general has generated a new critical balance between various dental disciplines, with a crucial central role for dentomaxillofacial imaging. This development has gone hand in hand with the increasing use of implants in oral health care.

In the field of implant dentistry in particular, the ongoing revolution is creating a paradigm shift, with the traditional role of imaging for radiodiagnostic purposes nowadays being diluted amongst a vast number of imaging-based tools and therapies fitting digital implant dentistry. Researchers and clinical specialists in implant dentistry have consequently moved in the same direction. They need imaging more than ever – not only for primary diagnostics, but also for preoperative planning, therapy and follow-up analysis. The growing importance of maxillofacial imaging in implant dentistry has opened new doors, and likewise created new challenges for researchers and clinicians. Virtual patient creation and artificial intelligence are around the corner.

To stay properly connected and up to date, while remaining scientifically accurate, journals may be forced to increase their expertise and knowhow in this rapidly developing field. Even then, there is a potential risk that research is overtaken by innovation. It is the challenge of a journal to deal with this digital revolution in a healthy harmonic way. Yet for now, some ground-breaking inventions may remain beyond imagination.

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