
Editorial Dental Photography Proficiency

In the age of digital dentistry, practicing clinicians should be proficient in dental photography. As the digital revolution infiltrated our field, focus has been placed on the development of digital workflows, scanning technologies, and manufacturing techniques. A dental team trained properly in dental photography would have an advantage in achieving optimal outcomes for all patients.

Dental photography has been used as a tool for documentation and as a marketing instrument to share exceptional results with colleagues. However, the importance of clinical photography matches that of other regular protocols in our field. Take dental impressions, for example. If an impression has a void or distortion in a critical area, we all agree it must be remade. Failing to do so will lead to a deficient final restoration. The same can be said for clinical photography. If the shade evaluation is under- or overexposed and has incorrect white-balance settings, the image must be retaken.

However, unlike those who would demand an impression remake, few seem to pay attention when photography standards are not met and images are not corrected. Many issues between restorative dentists and dental technicians could be improved by the exchange of optimal photographs, and we should consider how photography proficiency would improve the services we provide to our patients.

An improperly taken photograph leads to an erroneous representation of what the reference teeth truly look like. Underexposure results in higher levels of perceived chroma as well as increased areas of translucency, opacity, and opalescence that are not visible when the teeth are examined with the naked eye. Overexposure will lead to a higher perceived

value. A lack of proper understanding of white-balance settings will produce a photograph that does not represent the true color temperature of the lighting in which the photo was taken. In simple words, the colors simply look off, as if a filter has been placed on the photo. Improper framing and angulation will create distortion of face-to-teeth proportions, which might alter the development of a digital smile design. All of this will culminate in the fabrication of restorations, both provisional and final, that are functionally and esthetically deficient, just as if the final impression was deficient. Further proficiency and understanding of valuable dental photographic principles will lead to the creation of excellent restorations that are functionally and esthetically significant to the patient.

With the advent of dental photography equipment that is of high quality and relatively affordable, dentists are expected to be highly competent in all aspects of dental photography, just as competence is demanded in all other aspects of their field. Several high-quality, in-depth, didactic, and hands-on photography courses are available. A scientifically based dental photography course will provide dentists and their teams with the necessary knowledge to achieve more successful results.

Dental photography should be introduced in every dental school's curriculum. The training is available, and appropriate knowledge of the fundamentals of dental photography help the dentist improve the quality of care, increase the standards of restorative results, and fulfill their obligation to deliver the best possible treatment.

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