

GUEST EDITORIAL

Combating the burnout epidemic in dentistry

As a new graduate, my primary focus was on clinical prowess. I aspired to emulate my mentors in esthetics, implantology, and periodontics. I dedicated myself to working 6 days a week, often for 10 to 12 hours a day, followed by reading articles late into the night. This intense regimen improved my clinical skills over a few years, but it came at a significant cost: burnout.

Externally, everything appeared perfect. I had a high-profile practice in Beverly Hills, California, offering top-tier treatments ranging from biomimetic dentistry to guided surgery and digital smile design. I earned a good income, drove luxury cars, and enjoyed the support of my family. However, internally, I struggled with patient and team challenges and deteriorating health. I had become a dental robot, consumed entirely by my profession. I was no longer Kyle Stanley; I was only Dr Stanley.

Realizing the necessity of self-care, I decided to prioritize my well-being. It might sound selfish, but much like the airplane safety instruction to secure your own oxygen mask before helping others, you can only support your children, spouse, or neighbors if you are in a good place yourself.

Seven years into my practice, I embarked on a journey to enhance my mental, relational, and physical health for sustainable success in dentistry. I redefined my boundaries and expectations and improved my communication skills – skills often overlooked by dentists until it's too late.

After overcoming my challenges and assisting over 1000 dentists worldwide with their mental wellness, I understood that true wellness in dentistry is threefold:

Patient wellness: We must plan treatments holistically, considering our patients' overall health. This involves collaboration with practitioners outside our specialty and even outside dentistry. Integrating medical and plastic surgery colleagues into our treatment plans can be highly beneficial.

Practice wellness: Our businesses must thrive to provide top-tier treatment and support for our teams and families. While many dental professionals enter the field to help people, running a business poses



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Why a jellyfish on the cover?

A flying device that imitates the swimming movements of a jellyfish has been developed by scientists at New York University. It has four wings arranged in a circle that open and close. This allows the construction, which weighs only 2.1 g, to rise and float through the air. The so-called ornithopter generates propulsion by moving its wings and does not require any control technology or stabilization by sail surfaces. The new device consists of three rings made of carbon fibers, a small motor, and four 8-cm-long wings covered with a transparent polyester film.

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significant challenges, including staffing, payroll, and leadership. Investing in our practices can create better environments for patient care and team support.


Practitioner wellness: Often neglected, this type of wellness is crucial. Dental professionals must perform at high levels daily for decades, akin to F1 drivers. Our diet, relationships, exercise, gratitude practices, meditation, and sleep must be optimized. Setting boundaries, managing expectations, and effective communication are essential for maintaining peak performance.

One of the biggest misconceptions in dentistry is that being a great clinician guarantees success. We must first define success. If you practice for over 30 years with excellent margins and a strong reputation but have poor health, no relationship with your children, no friends, and only your clinical work as a legacy, is that truly success? I would argue that it is not.

The most successful dentists I know achieve holistic success, not just linear success. You can be passionate about dentistry while also being a well-rounded person with hobbies, good physical health, and strong relationships. This is true holistic success.

To achieve long-lasting, sustainable success in dentistry, focus not only on clinical skills but also on your mental, physical, and relational wellness. Dentistry is a remarkable profession that enables us to improve our patients' health, functionality, and confidence. Let's end the stigma around mental wellness in our field and support colleagues who may be suffering in silence. It all starts with awareness.

Sincerely



Kyle Stanley

