The Dental Hygienist as an Implant Coordinator
RDH UOR – August 2014
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Program Objective:

With the rapid growth of implant dentistry, many dental hygienists are pursuing the role of implant coordinator as a career path. The many facets of implant dentistry can create challenges to understanding all the phases of treatment and how to effectively coordinate the implant procedures in the dental practice. This course will teach systems and strategies for adapting the hygienists’ skills necessary to become an implant coordinator.

Program Goals:
Upon completion of this program, the dental hygienist should be able to:
1. explain implant treatment plans, procedures and appointment sequencing
2. present patients with implant fees and payment options
3. practice excellent documentation
4. understand essential components of implant consent forms
5. review implant communications
6. design an implant inventory control system
7. discuss attracting new implant patients

Outline:
1. Introduction
2. Implant History and Components
3. Implant Coordinator Duties
4. Implant Patient Selection
5. Communication – Verbal/Written
6. Treatment Plans/Financial Arrangements/Schedule Coordination
7. Practice Systems

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Oral disease affects the most basic human needs: the ability to eat and drink, swallow, maintain proper nutrition, smile and communicate.
-NIDCR Strategic Plan

**Oral Implantology:**

The science and discipline concerned with the diagnosis, design, insertion, restoration, and/or management of the alloplastic or autogeneous oral structures to restore loss of contour, comfort, function, esthetics, speech, and/or health of the partially or completely edentulous patient. Misch, Contemporary Implant Dentistry

**Implant Numbers:**

2010: estimate $1.5 million in US alone (Millenium Research group)

2011: 30% of worldwide market = US (HCF)

$5.1 billion worldwide sales (Millenium)

Mini-implants are the fastest growing area of implant dentistry (1.8 – 2.4mm)

**Challenges As Reported By Offices Reluctant To Be More Involved In Implant Dentistry**

- Lack of or inadequate treatment planning
- Diagnostic challenges/team ratios
- Scope of practice/practice mission
- Rapidly changing knowledge
- Technology without technical competency
- Inconsistency in treatment planning and follow-up
- Inadequate communication among providers

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Duties of Implant Coordinator

Osseointegration Definition, Why Titanium, Dental Implant Types, Factors

Inter-Office Communications and Relations

- Increases referrals
- Seamless communication with other offices
- Share information pertaining to patient’s case (within HIPPA compliance)
- Patient always has the proper appointment
- Surgical template to surgical office
- Patients don’t get lost in the shuffle

Communication With Lab and Implant Reps

- Avoid appointments without the proper inventory/supplies
- Avoid numerous try-ins and remakes
- Assure doctor, patient and lab all know expected outcome
- Avoid extra chair time due to improper parts/pieces or modifying prosthesis
- Avoid numerous phone calls to and from lab

ALL OF THESE WASTE TIME AND PROFITABILITY

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Intra-Office Communications & Information

- Keep patient centered
- Increase profitability with good communication
- Avoid poor scheduling choices
- Reduce stress and the blame game
- Make your office and team look flawless
- Increases referrals
- HAPPY PATIENTS = HAPPY TEAM = HAPPY DOCTOR = PROFITABILITY

Patient Communication

Commonly Asked Questions

Written Communication – Online or Print

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Patient Communication – Follow Up

Patient Record Documentation – Informed Consent

Fees

Insurance

Bridge vs. Implant

Medical Necessity

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Finances

- Offer a variety of payment options
- Firm but flexible policies
- Always written
- 5% accounting reduction
- Payment by appointment
- Bank cards – credit card authorizations
- Financial institutions
- Third party financing

Scheduling

Inventory Control

Public Relations/Marketing

Implant Coordinator/Case Presentation

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Implanting a smooth process

ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR NEXT ROLE AS IMPLANT COORDINATOR?

BY ANN-MARIE C. DEPALMA, RDH, MED, FADIA, FAADH

With the ups and downs of the economy over the last few years, along with other contributing factors, many hygienists are seeking alternatives beyond clinical hygiene practice. Many enjoy dental hygiene and are passionate about dentistry in general while excited about the possibilities that implants can provide patients and the challenges of continuing to learn. How can one use the skills, knowledge, and passion for dentistry, implants, and dental hygiene to forge a new career path? One pathway involves becoming an implant coordinator.

The rapid growth of implant dentistry requires skills and knowledge that the hygienist appropriately understands and can communicate to patients. The many facets of implants can create challenges to understanding all the phases of treatment. The Association of Dental Implant Auxiliaries (ADIA), a component of the International Congress of Oral Implantologists (ICOI), recognized the desire of some hygienists to move beyond clinical hygiene and developed the “Dental Hygienist as Implant Coordinator” program. Lynn Mortilla, RDH, ADIA executive director and ICOI director of operations, along with certified educators of ADIA (this author included) present the implant coordinator program to educate hygienists and team members on the opportunities that being an implant coordinator can bring to a practice and individual.

Upon participating in the implant coordinator program, participants will:

- Explain implant treatment plans, procedures, and appointment sequencing
- Present patients with implant fees and payment options
- Practice excellent documentation
- Understand essential components of implant consent forms
- Review implant communications
- Design an implant inventory control system
- Discuss attracting new implant patients

The overall goal of the program is to provide dental hygienists with the basic skills and knowledge of implant dentistry so that he or she can assume the role of implant coordinator within a practice. The program is didactic in nature but audience participation and role-playing are incorporated throughout the program.

What specifically does it take to be an effective implant coordinator? An implant coordinator takes the challenges that a practice faces, the lack of systems, planning, or education, and transforms these challenges to provide the patient and practice with opportunities to grow. However, an implant coordinator must also be able to balance the multiple demands at any given time. The program reviews communication skills that keep the practice patient centered while avoiding poor scheduling choices,
reducing stress, and increasing referrals. These communication tools ultimately produce happy patients, happy teams, and happy doctors while increasing practice profitability.

Implant coordinators also must understand the entire implant process. Discussions regarding the history of implants, basic implant terminology, surgical and prosthetic requirements, dental and medical considerations, documentation, risk management, and patient financing are examined for participants of the program. On any given day, an implant coordinator may be asked to assist in patient selection and acceptance, perform referring office and patient communication, follow-up and relationship building, review treatment plans, appointment schedules and financial arrangements, develop practice systems and tracking forms, build community awareness and education, and provide overall practice marketing.

As a result of his or her educational background, a hygienist has the skills and knowledge to be able to perform many of these duties. Adding the role of implant coordinator to one’s resume can provide the next level of lifelong learning for a hygienist. The ideal personality for the role is someone who has clinical knowledge, enjoys working with implants and implant patients, displays a confident personality, is comfortable quoting complete treatment fees, is confident in the doctor and team’s abilities, can communicate with referring offices and/or labs effectively, and has excellent listening skills. If that describes you, the position of implant coordinator may be your next career move!

Speaking with several implant coordinators about their transition from clinical hygienist to implant coordinator, the common denominator in their interviews was that every day is different. With so many tasks to be accomplished and patients to educate, the role of implant coordinator means juggling a multitude of responsibilities at any one time. Time management is critical in the coordinator’s position, along with the ability to prioritize duties.

As a hygienist, the implant coordinator can relate to the patient on a personal level often created from their clinical role within the practice. Being highly organized and detail-oriented with an understanding of the complete implant process are other components cited by several of the coordinators. Knowing the questions to ask a patient and when to listen and really hear the patient is another key component of successful implant coordinators. Being able to discuss large-case finances without judgment is critical; the coordinator has to be comfortable in knowing and discussing any fee or financial concern with patients.

Each practice that utilizes the skills of the implant coordinator will list responsibilities of the position in a variety of areas. The basic arenas that the role will entail will include the new patient/existing patient implant experience, treatment planning and consultation, education, and financial arrangements. Since education is the hallmark of the dental hygienist’s career, the educational component of an implant coordinator fits perfectly with the hygienist’s background. The implant coordinator will often be called upon to create marketing campaigns for the practice including new-patient welcome packets, patient letters, and practice newsletters with the education of patients regarding the implant process as the focus. As the face of the practice to the local community, the implant coordinator can participate in local community events to improve practice visibility and implant knowledge. Additionally, the implant coordinator will serve as a follow-up contact for the patient, prior to, during, and after implant treatment. Having a go-to contact for the patient during the implant process helps solidify the patient’s importance in the practice. The implant coordinator can:

- Check to see how the patient is doing during the implant process
- Inform/educate the patient regarding the next phase of treatment
- Ask questions regarding barriers to proceeding
- Assist the patient in overcoming treatment barriers including assisting with financial and insurance obstacles

Another component of the implant coordinator position involves assuring that the proper implant components are available, along with ensuring that effective lab and referral communications are in place. If the practice only participates in a portion of the implant process (surgery or restorative only), the implant coordinator is charged with making sure that coordination between offices is effective and efficient. Having the appropriate implant components available is essential for the process to be seamless. Working effectively with implant manufacturer sales representatives is important to the
success of the implant process. Communicating with the lab as to the desired results is imperative — the implant process is one that begins with the end in mind — and knowing what type of prosthesis the patient requires and how that is to be achieved.

As in many areas of dental practice, communication is critical to the success of implant procedures, and the implant coordinator must have effective systems in place to communicate efficiently. The implant coordinator must also be comfortable in utilizing technology and understanding the practice management software, along with CAD/CAM and 3D imaging as appropriate.

With all of this information, are you excited about assuming a new role within your practice as implant coordinator? The implant coordinator position allows a hygienist to take on added responsibilities and assume a leadership role within the practice. True leadership, however, comes with tremendous responsibility. The first responsibility is to take ownership of one’s own inspiration and greatness. Are you ready to take ownership of your career? RDH

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**Duties of implant coordinator**

For the new patient or an existing patient who is interested in learning about implants, the implant coordinator participates in the process by:
- Reviewing the patient’s medical and dental history along with the determination of the patient’s interest, reason, and concerns regarding implant treatment
- Obtaining diagnostic models and imaging as appropriate and within the hygienist’s scope of practice
- Charting and presence during doctor/patient evaluation and interview
- Scheduling
- Follow up on treatment recommendations and referrals as appropriate

During the treatment planning and consultation process, the hygienist as implant coordinator will:
- Review with doctor appropriate radiographs, diagnostic imaging, and models so as to have a thorough understanding of patient’s needs including review and discussion of 3D imaging
- Assist in the preparation of the treatment plan in appropriate form, including digital or paper documentation
- Determination of financial responsibilities of treatment including insurance benefits and patient financing options to be presented during the consultation appointment
- Prepare consultation area with appropriate radiographs/imaging and other diagnostic materials and with all appropriate documentation readily accessible (financial, informed consent, etc.)
- Be present during the doctor’s presentation of proposed implant treatment to patient and interested stakeholders
- Be available and knowledgeable to answer questions regarding clinical information after the doctor’s clinical presentation (and the doctor has excused him or herself from the consultation)
- After clinical discussion and questions have been answered, discuss financial issues. Identifying the patient’s objections and understanding ways to overcome them through verbal communication skills improves implant case acceptance.
Patient Name ___________________________________________ Home Phone (      )_____________________

Address ____________________________________________ City __________________ State ______ Zip ______

Surgeon_________________________________________ Restorative______________________ Consultation Date __________

Radiographs:         Panorex ______________________________         Diagnostic Casts ______________________________
                   FMX _________________________________         Photographs ________________________________

Surgical Template □ Yes □ No Date Mailed ______________________________________

PROSTHESIS TYPE: □ Single Unit □ Cemented Retained Bridge

SURGERY
Bone Graft Date ___________________________ Placed ___________________________

Sinus Lift / Augmentation ___________________________ 2nd Stage Surgery _______________________

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ABUTMENTS

PROSTHODONTIC PROCEDURES
Consultation ___________________________ Abutment Connection Date_________ X-ray to Verify: □ Yes □ No

Final Impressions ___________________________ Sent to Laboratory _______________________

Esthetic Try In ___________________________ Final Lab Return Date ___________________

Insertion ___________________________ Cement_____________________________ Insertion X-ray _______________________

Oral Hygiene Instruction _______________________________________________________________________________________

Post Insertion Check___________________________________________________________________________________________
PATIENT TRACKING FORM

Patient Name _________________________________________________________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________ City ____________________________ State _______ Zip ______________

Phone (        ) ____________________________________________ Referred by___________________________________________

Oral Surgeon _________________________________________________________________________________________________

Restorative Dentist _____________________________________________________________________________________________

DATE / NOTES

☐ Sent Implant Information Packet

☐ Follow Up Phone Call

☐ Sent Patient Registration Forms

☐ Scheduled Surgical Consultation

☐ Scheduled Restorative Consultation

☐ Stage 1 Surgery

☐ Stage 2 Surgery

☐ Restorative Appointment/Impressions Taken

☐ Case Sent to Lab

☐ Try-In

☐ Case Returned From Lab

☐ Restorative Completed

☐ Oral Hygiene Instruction

☐ Thank You Letter

☐ Maintenance Appointment

Comments ___________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________