

COMMENTARY

MERGING ORTHODONTICS AND RESTORATIVE DENTISTRY: AN INTEGRAL PART OF ESTHETIC DENTISTRY

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I found this short paper to be refreshing in its sensible, philosophical approach. The treatment presented is conservative and very effective. Far too often, dentists reach for the diamonds and reduce tooth structure unnecessarily. Judicious orthodontics combined with carefully placed resin composite restoration, to me, was by far the best option.

Anyone who reads the dental literature on a regular basis is aware of the ongoing debate regarding over treatment from a restorative perspective. Some of our most influential and respected clinicians as well as organizations have voiced concern over aggressive treatment and the ethical issues involved.^{1,2} This controversy and concern can easily spill over into the mainstream media as witnessed by a recent segment on *Good Morning America* entitled “Drilling for dollars.”³

This article is a very good reminder that patients deserve to be offered alternatives—and not just alternatives but also trusted counsel. Patients these days are very aware of quick-fix esthetic solutions, including indirect ceramic restorations. Many are not aware of the long-term consequences to their health and pocketbooks. Dentists have the responsibility to not immediately acquiesce to the urgency of patients’ desires.

That is exactly what the authors of this short case report did. They offered wise counsel and performed a valued service in the best interest of the patient. The treatment provided was not the quickest approach and not the most remunerative, but it was, in my opinion, the best treatment. The choice of orthodontics, tooth whitening, and composite resin restorations took a little longer but provided a predictable, conservative, and healthy result.

Look up the definition of a profession and you are likely to find the following: “professions are usually regulated by professional bodies that may set examinations of competence, act as a licensing authority for practitioners, and enforce adherence to an ethical code of practice.” We must, as a profession, remember that society grants us certain privileges based upon trust. We violate that trust at our own peril. We as practitioners must always put the welfare of our patients first and demand that our state boards and professional organizations settle for nothing less.

REFERENCES

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2. The Board of Regents of the American College of Dentists. The ethics of quackery and fraud in dentistry: a position paper. *J Am Coll Dent* 2003;70(3):6–8.
3. Good Morning America. Drilling for dollars. ABC News. January 21, 2008.

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