Editorial



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arlier this year I received an invitation to participate in a "Looking Back" meeting that would celebrate the work of two distinguished British colleagues, Professors Edwina Black and Harold Preiskel. The meeting's speakers were asked to talk about "How research over the last 30 years has changed clinical practice," a time frame that almost matched the four decades I was about to conclude as a clinical academic. The assignment caught me in a bittersweet frame of mind, since I was facing the inevitable shunting into enforced retirement, which my particular Canadian Province of Ontario demands of its university teachers. It was also a happy reminder of the remarkable opportunity that prosthodontists of my vintage have enjoyed in presiding over the profound changes that occurred in managing their patients' needs and in the evolving focus of the discipline. My task was a clear one: a reread of Harold Preiskel's many contributions to provide me with scaffolding for framing a presentation that paid tribute to him while fulfilling my lecture assignment.

The notion of retaining some natural teeth to support removable prostheses, either as removable partial dentures or later on as overdentures, underscores the single dominant fact regarding the significance of patients' perceived security of their prostheses. Since the late 60s, several authors expanded the scope of the overdenture technique and relied on the technique's ingenuity and salvage potential. This occurred even to the extent of placing extraordinary faith in the longevity of covered and therefore vulnerable tooth roots. The motivation for prescribing the technique was admirable, even if the desired treatment outcome remained the avoidance, or at least, the temporary postponement of a completely edentulous predicament. Harold Preiskel's particular work in this field laid down the groundwork for the eventual prudent merger of osseointegration and overdenture techniques. The simplicity and logic of his approach has now benefited numerous edentulous patients worldwide and offers a new therapeutic standard for the routine management of mandibular edentulism. It has also catalyzed an entirely new thrust in undergraduate dental education, since it permits exciting new initiatives for teaching and acquiring surgical as well as prosthodontic skills.

The luxury of aging is arguably one of the 20th century's major achievements. It has resulted from a miracle medicine scenario with much promise of genetic engineering and regenerative medicine. Dentistry has already been in the orofacial "spare parts" business for a very long time, also with much promise but with different degrees of success. However, our discipline's real claim to an evidence-based biotechnology only reached its apogee in the last 30 years with the introduction of implant prosthodontics. Today, we can look back with pride at an extensive and qualitative spectrum of clinical research that endorses the clinical benefits of the osseointegration technique. The aged edentulous patient, more particularly if burdened with denture adaptation problems, is no longer confronted with an unhappy prosthodontic future as in the past. Implantsupported overdentures now provide the very reliable spare part for a missing dentition, a predictable antidote for past unhappy denture experiences. The clinical yield from such an applied osseointegration technique is confirmed by five compelling determinants: (i) provision of prosthesis retention and stability; (ii) retardation of bone resorption; (iii) minimal treatment outcome morbidity; (iv) economic benefits for specific treatment protocols; and (v) enrichment of patients' life quality. Admittedly, very few clinical implant studies fall into the upper tier of a traditional evidence-based hierarchy. Randomized control studies are particularly difficult to conduct, given the required heterogeneity of the starting point, the frequent complexity of the outcome, as well as the long time scale required. Furthermore, it seems unconscionable to deny implant treatment to patients diagnosed as prosthetically maladaptive when well-documented clinical experience strongly endorses the technique's predictable outcome. Hence, the importance of using scrupulously documented prospective studies with clearly articulated patient inclusion and exclusion criteria plus rigorous and standardized outcome measures as a basis for making informed clinical decisions.

Harold Preiskel's championing of the merits of the expanded overdenture technique was just one of his many important contributions to international prosthodontics. He has also been an outstanding clinical academic who has helped train and nurture numerous national and international graduate students who were privileged to study with him and his colleagues at

Guy's Hospital at the University of London. A confirmed internationalist, he played a pivotal role in the founding of the International College of Prosthodontists. He found many willing colleagues who shared his dream of an international forum for the discipline in the 70s, notably Peter Schärer and Jack Preston. However, it was Harold Preiskel's vision, courage, and single-mindedness that eventually catalyzed the ICP's formation. His intellectual curiosity and burning sense of right and wrong contributed enormously to the College's development, as reflected in its high-calibre biennial meetings and the quality of this journal. He has been one of the most respected lecturers on the international scene, much sought-after and very much involved in organized prosthodontics; but he remains above all else a loving and exemplary family man. He is highly cultured, eclectic in his literary and musical tastes, and a very fine pianist indeed. I thought it appropriate to append this essay by the Nobel Laureate John Polanyi at my university, as a collective IJP thank you to Harold Preiskel for his invaluable leadership.

I am confident that his many international friends and colleagues will want to join me in wishing him and his family much happiness and good health as he now changes direction in a long and distinguished professional journey. L' chaim!

Peaceable kingdoms of science and music

Science and music have a common aim, which is to make Sense of our existence. Each in its own language draws on the culture of the age, which is the sum of human knowledge. It follows that each signals to the other through the mosaic of contemporary understanding.

The natural world inspires experimental science directly, music indirectly. Yet the number of musical notes is restricted by nature. The arrangement of these notes into patterns must fit within the framework of Creation, which also dictates the symmetries of science.

Since neither music nor science are arbitrary, both being part of the God-given world, they reappear in the structure of the cosmos and the atomic nucleus. Early astronomers vaulted from physics into music, authenticating their planetary models through harmony; the so-called "music of the spheres."

Don't think those times are past. Werner Heisenberg, he of the uncertainty principle and the play *Copenhagen*, remarked famously that it was more important that his equations be beautiful than that they fit the facts.

This puzzles people, but it shouldn't. Beauty is forever. Facts have a way of proving to be wrong.

There are, of course, dangers in these professional flights of fancy. Our jeu d'esprit must ultimately be disciplined into science that works, and music that is valid. How is this done?

The communities of science and music police themselves. Not every collision of notes can be allowed into Roy Thomson Hall, nor every broth of algebraic symbols see print in Science. New ideas must be tested against standards of beauty and truth. The responsibility for this devolves, ultimately, on the reigning monarchs of the two professions.

This is not a hereditary monarchy, nor is it formally elected. Leadership in science and music is accorded temporarily, and consensually.

What we have here are two human societies, both of a profoundly competitive nature, agreeing on procedures for distinguishing success from failure, rewarding the former and denying rewards to the latter while having little or no formal governmental structure with which to do so; no written laws, no visible police, no robed judges (unless you include evening dress) and no punishment cells. Here are societies with goals so deeply felt and so widely accepted that internal peace can be maintained without resort to violence.

These, for all their injustices and contentions, are the Utopias that music and science offer. These peaceable kingdoms are

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