

Perspectives

RIGHT ON RON!

Contemporary esthetic dentistry has afforded today's dentist the potential for dramatically improving the appearance of a patient's smile. Ceramic veneers, in particular, have become a vitally important option in our esthetic dentistry armamentarium. Placed properly utilizing intraenamel preparations for predictable and durable retention, etched porcelain veneers can be expected to provide outstanding esthetic improvement for many years.

According to an excellent retrospective clinical study by Dr. Mark Friedman, a pioneer in porcelain veneer development, porcelain veneers demonstrated a 93% success rate following 15 years of service.¹ Research also unequivocally has demonstrated the vastly superior durability of bonds to enamel compared with those to dentin,²⁻⁴ yet gross overpreparation for ceramic veneers into dentin is erroneously advocated by many, particularly those from prominent institutes. These institute gurus simply do not allow the facts to get in their way. As Dr. Friedman notes in his research article, "When the entire prepared surface of the tooth is in enamel, a complete debonding

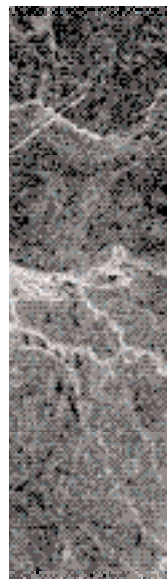
is virtually impossible."¹ Used when properly indicated with intraenamel preparations, porcelain veneers can be expected to provide conservative esthetic results indefinitely, with virtually no incidence of debonding or sensitivity.

Indeed, the use of veneers in dentistry is not without its dark side. As Dr. Gordon Christensen, one of the most respected voices in dentistry recently noted in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*, "In my opinion, over treatment with ceramic veneers is at an all-time high, and other more conservative treatment methods need to be presented to patients, considered and encouraged."⁵ I could not agree more. Of greater concern is the apparently increasing incidence of overpreparation of teeth for veneers as advocated by prominent self-aggrandizing institutes and self-appointed cosmetic "experts."

Misinformed and poorly trained dentists following these misguided teachings are flooding the marketplace with veneers that, by increasing accounts, are often poorly rendered. The result, in my opinion, is a generation of "dental cripples":

numerous unsuspecting patients who have been led to believe that the answer to their often minor esthetic concerns is ceramic veneers. A growing number of case reports reveal veneers so deeply prepared into dentin that the results inevitably lead to premature replacement of the failed restorations with crowns, endodontic treatment, or even implants.

This observation has never been more bravely, eloquently, and vividly revealed than by Dr. Ronald Goldstein and host John Quinones in the ABC news TV show, "20/20," which aired last year. In contrast to shows such as ABC's "Extreme Makeovers" and the many TV segments and news pieces highlighting the positive aspects of ceramic veneers, Dr. Goldstein courageously provided a stark dose of reality regarding the real world of contemporary cosmetic dentistry. This segment clearly showed dramatic real-life cases of overtreatment with veneers and horrendous



clinical technique resulting in catastrophic results for unsuspecting patients. In fact, this segment highlighting reality-based insights into the dark side of veneer misuse could easily have been entitled "Extreme Dental Disasters."

The examples of overtreatment and poor-quality treatment shown in this segment, according to Dr. Goldstein, are all too frequent in dentistry today and represent, in my opinion, a rapidly growing concern for us all in the dental profession. Poorly trained dentists, often motivated by the monetary rewards of such "quick-fix" dentistry, are threatening the very reputation that has been the valued hallmark of our profession for many years.

As Dr. Christensen also states, "some patients and dentists have come to accept ceramic veneers as the primary quick fix for slightly to moderately unacceptable smiles."⁵ Frequently today, more conservative treatment options or approaches are simply being ignored, based all too often on the recommendations of misguided institutes bent on fostering

marketing strategies at the expense of clinical excellence.

Dr. Goldstein is in many respects the "godfather" of modern dental esthetics. No other individual has furthered the advancement and incorporation of interdisciplinary dental esthetics into mainstream dentistry than he. Both Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Christensen have devoted their lives to the betterment of dentistry. Both have boldly sounded warnings to the profession regarding the growing incidence of overtreatment and incompetence in the field of dental esthetics (see also Dr. Christensen's recent editorial entitled "I Have Had Enough!").⁶

Through ABC's "20/20," Dr. Goldstein accepted the unpopular and controversial position as spokesperson for our profession in this TV segment to highlight these growing concerns that heretofore have been largely ignored and glossed over by the media. His actions of courage and sincere concern to speak out to a national audience regarding these issues warrant a sincere "thank you" from all of us interested in maintaining

dentistry as a highly respected profession. We must do what is best for our patients, not what is best for our wallets, as is often the mantra of high-profile institutes and speakers that put marketing first. From my perspective, I would just like to say, "Right on, Ron!"

Harald O. Heymann, DDS, MED

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Harald O. Heymann is the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry.

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