

## COMMENTARY

### EVALUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBJECTS' PERCEPTION AND PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ESTHETIC TREATMENT NEEDS

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Success of esthetic dental treatment is not only dependent on the treatment philosophy and skills of the team rendering treatment as well as on their perception of dentofacial esthetics, but also on the perception of patients of dentofacial esthetics and their level of expectations of esthetic treatment outcomes. However, the perception of the need for esthetic treatment may differ between patients and clinicians. Moreover, patients' perception of dentofacial esthetics and their level of expectations of treatment outcomes may sometimes prove to be unrealistic. Cultural boundaries as well as social trends may also affect such perceptions. In this survey, the authors are revisiting these important issues while making an attempt to correlate between patients' subjective perceptions and a dentist's objective and subjective evaluation.

The methodology in this survey could be questioned because the questionnaires given to the patients and to the dentist evaluating their esthetic needs were not identical. In addition, as emphasized by the authors, the results of this study are limited and cannot be generalized as the survey was limited to a very specific population. Furthermore, there are many other parameters related to dentofacial relationships that may be evaluated.<sup>1</sup> The article serves to remind us of the paramount need for communication between clinicians and patients regarding realistic esthetic outcomes.

Communication between the team rendering treatment and the patient must be maintained throughout all phases of treatment, starting with the diagnostic phase, where a thorough interview of the patient is recommended and treatment outcomes must be communicated and agreed between the treating clinicians and the patient. All available forms of communication that facilitate the demonstration of realistic esthetic treatment outcomes (such as diagnostic mock-ups and diagnostic wax-ups prior to commencing treatment, and at a later stage the provisional restorations) must be used to ensure that patients are completely aware of the prospects and limitations of the treatment. A complete list of goals must be formulated, with a mutual agreement between the treating clinicians and the patient. Such an approach will help in preventing unpleasant surprises to both parties, as both parties may have different perceptions and expectations of the definitive result.

It should be emphasized that such an approach may be used not only when elective treatment is to be rendered, but also when essential treatment is rendered with esthetic components. Thus, to date, clinicians are challenged more than ever with the responsibility to be attuned to patients' expectations and provide them with long-lasting realistic esthetic results without compromising sound treatment periodontal, biomechanical, and functional concepts.

#### REFERENCE

1. Chiche GJ, Pinault A. *Esthetics of anterior fixed prosthodontics*. Chicago (IL): Quintessence; 1994, p. 13–33.

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