

Preface

Periodontology: Present Status
and Future Concepts



Frank A. Scannapieco, DMD, PhD
Guest Editor

Change is one thing, progress is another. “Change” is scientific, “progress” is ethical; change is indubitable, whereas progress is a matter of controversy.
—Bertrand Russell

Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are.
—Bertolt Brecht

As seems to be the norm these days in most health care disciplines, periodontology is in a state of flux. The changing demographics of disease; significant disparities in oral health in racial and ethnic minorities; constant amendments to third-party insurance plans; the dwindling number of patients with access to insurance; the explosion of new research methodologies and findings; and even the rapid progress made in human genome-related areas now conspire and will continue to push the practice of periodontics in many, often divergent directions. Certainly, general practitioners are treating an ever-greater proportion of the periodontal cases that present to their practice. However, it is not always the case that the generalist is prepared to deal with the complexities that present in the periodontal patient. On the other hand, the periodontist is often challenged to treat the more difficult cases and at the same time driven to incorporate the latest (and sometimes unproven) techniques and products into their practice.

The goal of this issue of the *Dental Clinics of North America* is to bring together various experts in the field of periodontology to write about topics that are pertinent to the practice of periodontics in the general practice setting. All of the authors who have been kind enough to sacrifice their valuable time to write an article are experts in the topic for which they write. First, foundational knowledge on the etiology, pathogenesis, epidemiology, and risk factors of periodontal diseases are presented. This updated knowledge is essential for decision-making regarding the diagnosis and treatment of the periodontal patient. Lately, there has also been considerable interest in the systemic effects of periodontal disease that has burgeoned into the new field of periodontal medicine. Recent findings in this area are thus also presented. A series of articles follow that provide a contemporary view of various aspects of prevention and treatment of periodontal disease in general practice. Finally, an article that speculates on how the practice of periodontics might change over the next 10 years is provided.

Together, it is our hope that these articles will be of use to the general practitioner who wishes to add to his or her knowledge to better treat the periodontal patient.

Frank A. Scannapieco, DMD, PhD
Department of Oral Biology
School of Dental Medicine
University at Buffalo
State University of New York
109 Foster Hall
Buffalo, NY 14214, USA
E-mail address: fas1@buffalo.edu