

TEAM IN FOCUS

PICTURE PERFECT

Continuing her series, business coach Laura Horton explains why systems need to be put in place to ensure that dental photography is a team responsibility

You may be wondering why dental photography is in the team development section this month. Why? Because it is vital that the team understand how to take a full series of dental photographs, which is essential for:

- **Documentation.** It helps maintain patient records to a high standard, and also provides dento-legal protection should a claim ever arise

- **Communication.** It is great for communicating with your laboratory, referral practice, patients during treatment plan presentations, and helps manage patient expectations. It also helps to build strong relationships between dental nurses and patients

- **Marketing purposes.** It provides before and after pictures for website and advertising purposes - obviously, if you have the patient's consent to do so!

- What is the situation with the batteries? Do you have spare batteries or they are rechargeable batteries? And where are these kept?

- How and when should pictures be downloaded?

I recommend that as soon as the photographs are taken, they are downloaded, dated and added to the

SYSTEMS IN PRACTICE

Dental photography is an essential part of every modern-day practice. It's the responsibility of the entire team and reduces the dentist's non-clinical time, and there should be a fantastic system in place that the team is responsible for executing.

There are many ways that dental photography can be introduced into practice. For example, individual team members can take responsibility of the following photographs:

- Preoperative and postoperative
- Preparations
- Temporaries
- Wax-ups
- Lab work when returned as a model.

It's worthwhile remembering that postoperative pictures should never be taken on the same day as treatment if the patient is experiencing numbness. You should always ask the patient to return to the practice for a final review where the occlusion can be checked, for example, and then you can use this opportunity to take photographs.

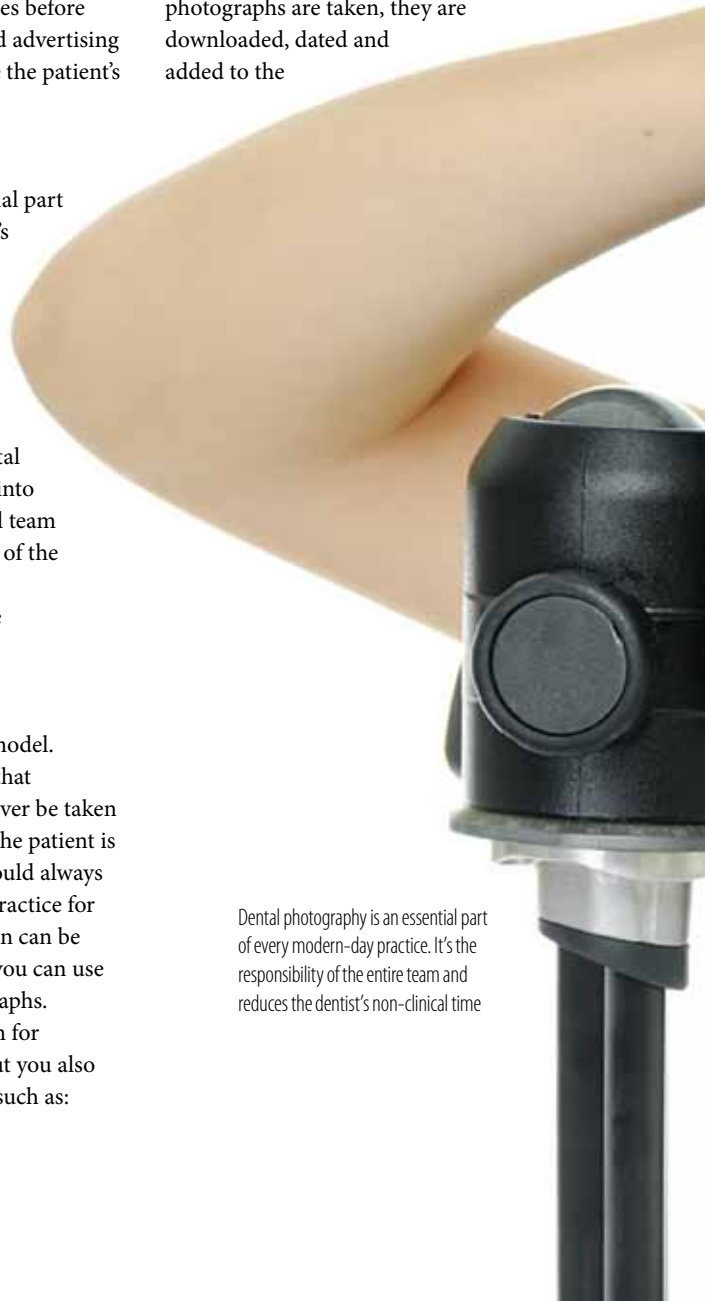
Not only do you need a system for photography in your practice, but you also require a system for the camera such as:

- Where is it kept?



Laura has worked in dentistry for 15 years and has an interest in treatment coordination and team development. In 2008 Laura left her full-time practice management role. Ever since, with her years of experience and vast amount of knowledge, Laura has been working with dental practices to help them successfully reach their true potential and is a treatment coordinator business coach.

*www.horton-consulting.com
Twitter: @LauraHorton1*



Dental photography is an essential part of every modern-day practice. It's the responsibility of the entire team and reduces the dentist's non-clinical time

patient's file straight away. You may want to have a different hard drive of photographs as this allows you to create detailed files.

You also need to decide which file type is necessary. I would suggest that you save all the photographs as jpeg files because they are smaller, making them more efficient to store on your hard drive.

ONE-DAY TRAINING

Dental photography training only takes a day. However, it's important to note that using the correct camera and equipment is crucial for success. I suggest a Canon camera with a 105mm macro

lens. You also need to make sure you are using the right mirror, which must be an extra large adult occlusal mirror. Similarly, ensure you have adult buccal double-ended retractors and contractors, which are fantastic for anterior shots of the front-four teeth.

Once you have taken the photographs, an understanding of Photoshop and Powerpoint will help with treatment plan presentations. This is easy to do and only takes a matter of minutes.

Dental photography is not something new. For many years orthodontic practices, for example, have ensured the team takes the photographs and, likewise in

America, it is rare for a dentist to pick up a camera. Dental photography is an essential and useful skill for all the team, and if it's something that you are not doing already, you need to jump on the bandwagon pretty quickly as you could potentially be missing out on a whole host of benefits.

For further information, please email Laura on laura@horton-consulting.com or call 01279 882720 www.horton-consulting.com

To ask a question or comment on this article please send an email to: comments@ppdentistry.com

