

85 West Algonquin Road, #550
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
E-mail: academy@osseo.org
Website: osseo.org
Phone: (800) 656-7736
Phone: (847) 439-1919

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Contact: William R. Wille
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williamwille@osseo.org; 847-725-2318

For Immediate Release

Prioritizing Ethics in the Age of Full-Arch Implant Dentistry

Arlington Heights, IL, December 16, 2024 – Innovations in implant dentistry such as digital workflows, guided surgery and full-arch immediacy, as well as remote anchorage techniques have transformed patient care, allowing clinicians to address dental issues with greater efficiency and predictability. However, alongside these advancements comes the responsibility to uphold the ethical standards that define our profession.

Reports of clinicians inappropriately extracting treatable teeth to place implants — often driven by speed or profitability rather than patient-centered care — are increasingly surfacing. A CBS article titled, “*Dentists are pulling healthy and treatable teeth to profit from implants, experts warn*” recently highlighted this issue.¹

The article alleges that aggressive marketing tactics, corporate pressures, and the commodification of dentistry are contributing to unnecessary overtreatment. These claims raise ethical concerns, emphasizing the need for our profession to prioritize preserving natural dentition whenever feasible, while leveraging advancements responsibly.

Ethical practice requires thoughtful, evidence-based planning with input from multiple disciplines, and tailored to each patient’s unique interests and circumstances. Preserving natural dentition, when possible, is not only a cornerstone of ethical practice, but is associated with better long-term outcomes. The risks and benefits associated with treatment options need to be weighed and clearly explained to patients.

It is important to scrutinize the messaging within these full-arch training courses. While the advantages of digital workflows and immediate solutions are undeniable, overly simplistic or profit-driven narratives risk promoting a mindset that prioritizes speed over thoughtful, ethical care. The clinician must carefully evaluate and inform the patient of the periodontal condition as well as restorability of these teeth prior to treatment. Besides, complications are an inherent risk of surgical treatment, and any implant rehabilitation is no exception.²

Greenwell H, Wang HL et al, highlight the principles of *Biologically Guided Implant Therapy* emphasizes a comprehensive evaluation from a periodontal perspective including periodontal grading as a foundation for treatment decisions.³ For patients with manageable periodontal disease, treatable dental caries, or endodontic infections, retaining and restoring natural teeth is often the preferred approach.⁴

Full-arch implant rehabilitation has a vital role in addressing complex dental needs, but it must never become a one-size-fits-all solution. Patients deserve a comprehensive diagnostic approach that prioritizes preservation as the first option. The Academy of Osseointegration (AO) plays a pivotal role in fostering this balance by creating a forum that respects diverse perspectives and practice settings.

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To serve and support AO members in their efforts to
advance the science and best practice in implant dentistry.



To maintain public trust and reinforce implant dentistry as a field defined by compassion and excellence, a unified effort is required:

1. **Public Education:** Patients must be empowered with clear, unbiased information, enabling them to make informed decisions based on clinical need rather than convenience or financial incentives.
2. **Professional Standards:** Dental organizations must uphold and reinforce guidelines that prioritize ethical treatment planning and informed consent, emphasizing the preservation of natural teeth wherever appropriate.
3. **Ethical Training:** Educators and program directors must instill the importance of patient-centered care, providing clinicians with the tools to make thoughtful, individualized decisions.

Let this serve as a call to action for clinicians, educators, and organizations alike. Together, we can reaffirm our commitment to ethical practice and secure the future of implant dentistry as a field of innovation, trust, and integrity, all in pursuit of the best possible outcomes for patients.

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About Academy of Osseointegration

With approximately 4,000 members in more than 70 countries, AO is recognized as the premier international association for scientists and professionals interested in osseointegration and implant dentistry. AO serves as a nexus where specialists, generalists and scientists can come together to evaluate emerging research, technology, and techniques; share best practices; and define optimal patient care using timely science and evidence-based methods. Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram @AcademyOsseo; @AcademyofOsseointegration on LinkedIn; and subscribe to us on YouTube.

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