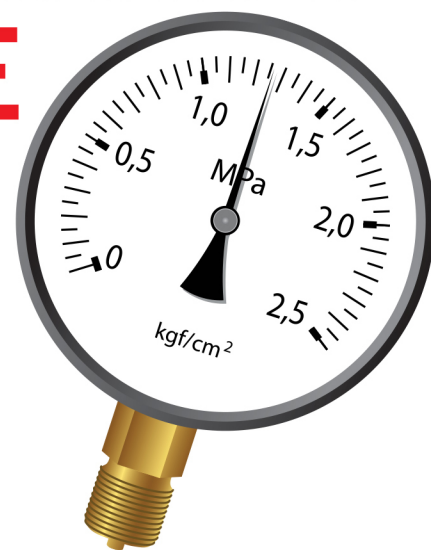




GIVING IN TO MARKET PRESSURE

EDITOR'S CORNER

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Trying to incorporate progressive innovations into our practices is, on the face of it, a good thing. How else will we advance as a profession? I remember what a boon it was when the Borden high speed handpiece was introduced in the late 1960's, and when fiberoptics were put into the Midwest Quietair in 1976. These were and remain great advances in our ability to provide quality care for our patients.

There are other ideas which are marketed to us which we feel equally encouraged to take up and latch onto in an ever increasingly competitive race for market share. Pausing to reflect upon some previous examples will help us to temper our impetuosity and possibly slow us from adopting nebulous innovation.

In casting my eye backward, the Waterpik controversy and the Atridox/Arestin regimes come to mind. The former does not remove plaque, and one wonders how the Teledyne company has managed to persuade millions of Americans to use this ineffective product. The later antibiotic therapy does not reduce periodontal pockets, well, not more than 0.5mm, which is completely insignificant for those for whom this treatment was prescribed, with over 4 and 5mm pockets.

More recently we have had the cancer screening kits with their fluorescent dyes and the test strips for an array of predispositions, none of which outdo the human eye and the prescription for regular brushing and flossing and check-ups, and all of which are extraordinarily expensive. While practice efficiency experts recommend marketing such additions to boost "production," I can't help having to admit that I felt slimy even considering it.

Looking to the present, and setting aside digital impressions and instant CAD/CAM crowns and inlays, which I do not want to frown on today, I would like to focus on social media and paying for favorable cyber-presence. If you have not been approached with a barrage of e-mails from a litany of companies touting their expertise at boosting your practice visibility, then you must be off the map somewhere. There is no doubt about it, the internet has completely changed the way patients look for and determine where they are going to receive care. We, as a profession, are constantly being told that we have to subscribe to this or that new service in order to be found on the

internet. The truth is that having numerous accurate concordant citations will enhance the way your practice appears in the search results. However, perhaps the most important thing you can do is to have lots of good reviews on the various sites where they are displayed. Google plus, CitiSearch, Yelp, Angie's List, Healthgrades and many others are good places to encourage reviewers to comment. Which brings me to the point I wanted to make, be cautious about signing contracts to pay to enhance your web presence. Simply having new threads posted, and artificially engaging in forums on social media sites can look fake and be costly. On the other hand, you have to cross Yelp management's palm with silver if you want to keep all your good reviews up and suppress the negative which is so unethical. If you have questions about products and services, do please remember that we are here for you at LADS. ■