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The ABC of digital impressions

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The virtual, the optical, or the digital impressions, have played a vital role in the field of dentistry particularly in the subject of prosthodontics. As a relatively new technique, the deficits in repeatability of the intraoral digital impression need to be solved, but dental products fabricated with intraoral digital impressions have presented accuracy on par with conventional impressions. Although conventional impression materials like polyvinyl siloxane and polyether are well-developed and present great accuracy in many prostheses, the intraoral digital impression technique has a distinct superiority in work efficiency and saving of materials. Digital impression technology can be applied to most areas in dentistry where we now use conventional impression material.

The concept of digital impressions is not new as it dates back to the 1980s. These innovative impressions have played a substantial role in aiding the designing and milling of the restorations i.e. CAD/CAM. A lot of controversy has been seen in relation to the conventional v/s the digital impressions, through the medium of published research. Much above these controversies is the magic of the digital impressions in the field of dentistry particularly the prosthodontics.

The present lecture discusses intraoral digital impression techniques in terms of the various aspects: (1) categories and principles of intraoral digital impression devices currently available; (2) operating characteristics of the devices; and (3) comparison of the manipulation, accuracy, and repeatability between intraoral digital impression and conventional impression.

Despite of the plethora of advantages associated with the intraoral impressions, there have been a few issues regarding the usage and selection of these impressions. The researchers/advocates are working from pillar to post to overcome the limitations associated with these impressions. With the continuous technological advancements going on, there would be a definitive boom in the clinical practices involving the digital impressions.

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