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Book Reviews

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Change your smile, 4th edition (2009)

Author: Ronald Goldstein
Publisher: Quintessence Publishing Co. Ltd., New Malden, Surrey, United Kingdom
Price: £19.75
ISBN: 978-0-86715-466-5

This book, which is now in its fourth edition, was designed to inform patients of the various options for changing the appearance of their smile and to engage them in the treatment planning process. The book is divided into 12 chapters with the emphasis on cosmetic dentistry procedures. It covers a range of topics including composites, veneers, crowns, bridges, implants, orthodontics, plastic surgery, and hair and makeup tips.

The chapters are well written and presented, and the format is easily understood if somewhat repetitive. The first chapter provides the patients with the tools necessary to evaluate their own smile and focuses the reader on what concerns them about their facial and dental appearance. The benefit of educating patients regarding their dental- and appearance-related concerns has great potential to enhance patient–practitioner communication and manage expectations.

Each chapter covers a different topic, for example, missing teeth, a 'bad bite' and crooked teeth, and presents a comprehensive list of treatment options or 'solutions' ranging from minimally invasive to the extreme. The various techniques are described in detail and richly illustrated, with quality photographs and diagrams. At the end of each chapter, a comparative list of all the options is tabulated outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each technique, together with cost, treatment time, maintenance and longevity.

I would caution that some of the options presented are not those commonly taught in UK dental schools, such as full arch veneers or all ceramic crowns to treat mild crowding. In addition, the long-term complications of such invasive techniques are not discussed in sufficient detail and comments such as crowns 'can trigger pulp irritation' may not be explanatory enough for most lay people to fully appreciate the possible sequelae.

It is encouraging that the author advocates orthodontic treatment as the treatment of choice for crooked or malpositioned teeth; however, the orthodontic references in this book are largely limited to cosmetic techniques such as clear aligners, ceramic brackets, and lingual appliances.

The concept of educating patients is an invaluable one as there is evidence that patients who are involved in shared treatment decision making are more satisfied with outcomes, and this book may play a useful part in communication and the consent process. In addition, Goldstein's 50-year vision of seeing the smile as more than just the teeth is to be applauded. However, I am unconvinced that the target audience will go out and buy this book, even at a competitively priced £19.75. General dental practitioners may find this a useful tool in educating patients and it may find its way into waiting rooms and dental surgeries; however, it is of limited relevance to the orthodontic speciality.

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