



## A National Symposium on Prosthodontics

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With the field of restorative dentistry undergoing such a metamorphosis in treatment rationale and material resource, the approaching 21st century holds unlimited promise for a new era in the provision of oral care. As diminishing tooth loss becomes more common in younger generations and increasing life span places new demands on surviving natural dentitions, restorative challenges heretofore unidentified lurk on the horizon.

Recognizing current concerns in patient management and looking to possibilities for improving the quality of future restorative services, the 1986 Federation of Prosthodontic Organizations House of Delegates approved the sponsorship of a National Symposium on Prosthodontics to be held in 1989. The objective of "Prosthodontics 21" is to address the pertinent issues in preparing the dental profession for new, creative prosthodontic programs of patient service, education, and research in the next century. This *think-tank* conference will be conducted using the *Michigan Workshop format*, which provides for structured section discussion groups of invited participants. Each section will be led by a selected faculty, with its deliberations centered on predetermined topics focused on a common theme. Following the preparation of section reports and recommendations, an open plenary session will be held to address the substance of each report. The symposium proceedings are to be published in early 1990.

Current projections suggest that the rapidly developing spectrum of alloplastic implant services for patients will be germane to symposium discussions concerned with the future delivery of clinical care and third-party relations. The research community is preparing for an avalanche of new investigations involving all phases of the implant modality. Affecting the patient most directly will likely be discussions concerning the increased dissemination of knowledge in undergraduate and postdoctoral dental curricula. Heretofore, the teaching of clinical and laboratory procedures related to dental implants has generally been provided in the continuing education sector for practicing dentists. Until recently, basic biologic and biomaterials science principles and concepts applicable specifically to implant therapy have not been a significant component of curricular offerings in dental schools. Increasing professional interest and new patient demands have dramatically impacted educational program content in this field.

While several organized postdoctoral programs have been established in dental implantology in the US, the number of programs accredited by the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation suggests that many practitioners now providing implant services lack formal education in this area. Directors of accredited advanced specialty education programs in oral and maxillofacial surgery and

periodontics have been actively reviewing their program standards/requirements involving implant-related treatment. Significant changes in the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation standards documents affecting implant curricula have, or soon will be made to implement, provisions for expanding the implant educational experience.

Associated with the 1989 prosthodontics symposium will be a workshop for directors of advanced education programs in prosthodontics. The workshop will address proposed changes in the advanced implant prosthodontics curriculum. The Academy of Osseointegration has generously contributed to the sponsorship of this workshop. It will bring all directors together for a consensus conference to develop the recommendations that will be made to the Federation of Prosthodontic Organizations (prosthodontics' sponsoring organization) and subsequently go to the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation for approval.

In its final statement (see pp 290-293), the 1988 NIH Consensus Development Conference on Dental Implants panel supported the need for a multidisciplinary approach to patient care; and further, it recommended a preimplant patient consultation involving all professional treatment participants. The panel noted that currently there are no data available that address the surgical, restorative, and periodontal educational requirements for individuals managing the implant patient. It is long overdue and quite appropriate that measures ensuring clinical competency of the implant service provider be implemented for the public protection. Future dental undergraduate and advanced specialty education program content concerned with implant dentistry must be uniformly enhanced. The coming National Symposium on Prosthodontics can provide the impetus for prescribing the needed revisions for restorative dentistry.