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Go "Super" With iTero digital

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How iTero turned Kunal Patel's dental surgery into a "super digital practice"

From childhood who doesn't dream of the super power they could adopt? For some, even once they reach adulthood, nothing has changed. For example, consider aspiring dental super hero Dr Kunal Patel: "In our field of dentistry, we may look older and sometimes more serious, but we still want to flex our superhuman powers – though maybe not to fight evil or battle supervillains.

"Many dentists make 'heroic' efforts to make a difference. Our weapons may be less theatrical, but some of us are adopting the iTero digital scanner as our super power of choice."

At a recent GP Forum meeting for dentists organised by Align Technology, Kunal presented about how he turned his clinic into a super digital practice. Two years ago, he was treating patients with fixed braces and using an intra-oral camera. At the time he calculated that 12- to 15-hours was the average time needed to treat each patient with fixed braces and that the practice spent over £5,000 on impression materials a year.

Today, his spending on impression materials is down to under £1,000, and patients only spend an average 2 ½ hours in the chair thanks to Invisalign. Kunal didn't need to wear a superhero's cape to effect these changes. Instead, he explained, he embraced the superpowers of digital dentistry and installed an iTero scanner in each of his treatment rooms at Love Teeth Dental Practice in Surrey – a total of three in just under six months.

Kunal reached Invisalign Diamond Provider status in the UK in a super-fast time. He completed his first Invisalign treatment in 2016 and is now performing 300+ cases a year. He quipped that he hopes his mum is very proud of him.

Ironically his mum, and his 11-year-old nephew, were featured in a film Kunal showed during the Align GP Forum to demonstrate that operating the iTero scanner is literally child's-play. He posited this 'super power' can be picked up in a matter of minutes by anyone, even those without dental experience, including his mum or an 11-year-old child.

Zero to Hero: Bringing a smile to patients' faces



Kunal turned to iTero and Invisalign during his search for a more contemporary, predictable way of performing orthodontic treatment, and for ways of using his chairside time more productively and profitably. The reputation of the Invisalign system made him reconsider the way he had been treating patients.

A few short months after embracing the Invisalign system the benefits became obvious to Kunal and his patients – and adopting the iTero scanner seemed simply the natural next step towards increasing the volume of cases he was performing. It worked! Kunal went

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keep dental modelling the norm, or save the modelling process from zero to Diamond Invisalign provider status within a year. The first solo practitioner to achieve this in the UK.

Initially he and his team focused on iTero's orthodontic and restorative functionality, using it for Invisalign treatments and cases requiring single unit crowns. However, they soon needed three scanners as they were using them for virtually every patient, including the creation of tooth whitening trays. Impression-taking is only undertaken now for the most difficult cases and full arch dentures, but the plan is to eventually reduce this to zero.

Kunal explained that he has rendered his intraoral camera obsolete as by using the iTero scanner, every patient gets a 3D check-up; an outcome simulation of what they will look like at the end of treatment – be it orthodontic or restorative (or a mix of the two) – plus a progress report at every appointment and so much more.

Citing newspaper editor Tess Flanders' quote, coined in 1911: "Use a picture. It's worth a thousand words," Kunal adds "Patients love it. They love to see what they will look like at the end of treatment, case uptake is much higher and faster, and consent is so quick to achieve."

His advice to his peers is: "Adopting digital dentistry is the only option if you are not to become obsolete. Training doesn't take long, and the scanning itself is really intuitive. If my 11-year-old nephew and mum can be taught how to use iTero in a few minutes, anyone can. And the savings are significant, with a lot less spent on impression materials – and a treatment coordinator salary you can potentially do without, let alone the chair time saved!

"So, if anyone wants to consider a scanner which helps with everything from a basic check-up to dental implant restorations, with the reassurance that you are only a call away from great support, the iTero could make you a super hero in the eyes of your colleagues and your patients."

Visit www.tero.com or www.facebook.com/iterodigitalimpressionsystem/ for the latest news regarding the iTero Element scanner portfolio.

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