

A new patient experience: The art of the complete examination

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Why perform a complete examination? The very core of what we do is diagnosing and treatment planning. To do this effectively, the clinician needs to perform a more comprehensive examination. One way to enhance this experience is to use digital photography. Since its introduction, digital photography has become a simple yet valuable tool in helping clinicians be more comprehensive. In addition, using the right diagnostic records will give the clinician all the armamentarium needed to provide a complete comprehensive treatment plan. Case examples will be used to illustrate the importance of the clinical examination, and how digital photography along with diagnostic records enhances the predictability of the treatment outcome.

Introduction: The clinical practice of dentistry has evolved in order to bring patients better materials, treatment choices, and outcomes. Although these advancements have given the clinician more success, the fundamentals of clinical practice have not changed. One of these fundamentals is the art of performing a complete initial examination, which is the single most important experience a patient can have. This comprehensive exam is truly an intrinsic aspect of the entire process that can only be described as a “complete exam” or “new patient experience,” since it begins the moment the patient enters the practice. The complete examination involves 12 important steps. These steps allow the dentist and their patient to have a co-discovery experience together. When done correctly, the patient becomes more curious about their conditions, and wants solutions to their problems. The use of digital photography provides valuable clinical information. Combining this with diagnostic records provides the clinician with a 2-D, & 3-D interpretation of their patients problems. Treatment planning with these valuable tools, along with data gathered at the complete examination allows the dentist to think and be respected as a *physician of the masticatory system*. This allows the clinician to be the true advocate of the patient’s dental health.

Learning objectives:

1. Understanding the 12 steps to a complete examination
2. Introduction to digital photography
3. Learn which photos are important to take
4. Learn and understand the need to have diagnostic records
5. What diagnostic records are needed
6. Effective communication during the examination

Biography

Neeraj Khanna attended the University of Toronto and completed his Bachelor of Science Degree (1989). He then continued Post Graduate studies at the University of Detroit Mercy- School of Dentistry and earned his DDS degree (1993). He then completed a General Practice Residency at the University of Rochester-Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York (1994). After being an Associate dentist for several years, he opened his practice (March 2000) in Illinois. Since then, he has been extensively involved in continuing education, and completed training at the prestigious Dawson Academy (St. Petersburg, FL). He has dedicated his practice to excellence in comprehensive restorative and esthetic dentistry. His philosophy involves treating every patient in the four aspects of complete dentistry. This includes achieving harmony between jaw joints, muscles, supporting tissues, and teeth. His passion for complete dentistry has led him to become involved with the Dawson Academy as an Associate faculty member. He has lectured in the United States, India, and UAE.

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