

Positive thinking during the Covid-19 crisis: getting closer to our patients



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Whatever happens next, the 2020 covid-19 pandemic crisis will be remembered as a marker in medical history. Our responds will set a precedent for the pandemics that are certain to come in the future. It is too soon to estimate the human and socio-economic damages, however, it is never too soon to try some positive thinking. So the question is: how can maxillofacial prosthodontists see the best out of this crisis? And the answer might be on multiple levels.

At the humanity level, with our patients, colleagues, staff, friends and family, we all have experienced a worldwide common fate.¹ This rare international feeling of uncertainty, yet worrisome threat must have been last shared during last century world wars.² The confinement of 3 billion people to their homes across the globe might lead to an awareness shock and a positive willingness to change.³ For example, ecology might have won something, beyond the pangolin salvation. Indeed, this crisis proved that within a couple of months the whole humanity can switch to a significantly slower pace of life, and decrease pollution.

At the community level, with our patients, colleagues, staff, friends and family, we have focused on priorities. The good news is that protecting the weakest have impacted international behaviors. For example, health and sustaining life became a priority over financial advancement and gain. Some spontaneous solidarities and collaborations emerged in families, neighborhoods, and national and international regions and industries, like manufacturing intubators and visors by 3D printing.

At the professional level, with our patients, colleagues and staff, we have adapted to the new professional environment. Beyond local and national disparities in healthcare infrastructures, we learned about ourselves, by either opposing the changes imposed by the crisis or by volunteering to lead through crisis.⁴ Some of us stepped forward with sensitivity and assuredness and others stepped back seeking the anonymity of the crowd. Creativity developed in this awareness time. More efficient workflows were drawn, especially in dental emergency procedures, and waste was decreased, particularly when FFP2/N95 masks were in a short supply. Academic telerdentistry and online education that we kept

postponing because we could, have finally been embraced because we had no choice.

At the individual level, with our maxillofacial patients, we have experienced confinement (Fig 1). Their everyday life became ours. We finally understand the meaning of staying at home, of social distancing, of avoiding unnecessary social interactions, and of inquisitive glances of others when walking in the streets. At the end of this crisis, our vision of the purpose of our existence and life priorities that really matters might evolve in new directions and make us reconsider our beliefs and duties. Focusing on the essential will bring us closer to our patients and better prepare us for the next pandemic crisis.



Fig 1. We might get closer to understanding our maxillofacial patient's life, who did not wait for the Covid-19 to experience confinement (Courtesy of Dr. Florent Destruhaut).

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