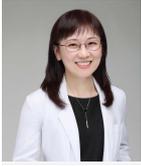


Communication: The key to successful teamwork



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As the third year of the global coronavirus outbreak approaches and in-person communication remains challenging, many professionals have become accustomed to obtaining continuing education from webinars. As a maxillofacial prosthodontist, I have spent more hours on these online trainings during these two years than before the outbreak. Social media activity from my colleagues reveals that they have had similar experiences. As I observed the fascinating cases from famous teams, I was inspired to improve teamwork in my own practice.

I recently worked with an unfamiliar surgeon, and our patient needed a left total maxillectomy. After the surgery, I was perplexed because the residual palatal torus was not managed according to our presurgical plan, which interfered with my subsequent procedure of delivering an interim obturator. Although the surgeon and I had discussed the treatment plan, and even used a modified maxillary model as a reference, there had clearly been a miscommunication between us. This unexpected incident reinforces the importance of efficient communication, especially since the members of the head and neck team at our university hospital come from different medical backgrounds.

Communication among team members is essential, but very difficult in a large institute such as ours; therefore, differences may exist in the treatment concepts and experience. Communication must be consistent and constantly addressed in order to improve. Effective communication should be gentle and pleasant; people are often resistant to feedback when it is presented as a command or criticism. For example, I asked my colleague if he had encountered a situation in which the defect could not be adjusted as planned. After his explanation, I thanked him for his reply and together we discussed a possible protocol that would help us avoid the same mistakes (Fig 1). Shifting to digital workflow is a good way to improve communication within the teamwork in maxillofacial prosthetics. Written reports, figures, and the IJMP are also excellent tools for improving communication. I believe that communication is a never-ending effort in teamwork, and it resolves disputes between different individuals, cultures, and countries.

Due to good communication, we continued to perform research to feedback on the clinical work and to improve the quality of life of our patients. It is my pleasure to introduce you to the ongoing 2022 issue with a few articles that cover various topics in maxillofacial prosthetics. Among them, “Feasibility and accuracy of using intraoral scanners to digitize maxillectomy defects for prosthetic rehabilitation: A systematic review” is published as a systematic review. “Facial prosthesis fabricated from dental material for an exposed reconstruction plate: A clinical report” and “Effect of a lingual augmentation prosthesis for preventing salivation after subtotal glossectomy: A clinical report” are both published as case reports. More articles will be published throughout the year.



Fig 1. Communication is a never-ending effort in teamwork.