



Challenges Facing Dental Laboratory Technology

Potential Problems and Challenges:

- ✚ Dental laboratory educational programs and recruitment.
 - Few technology programs are located in dental schools, and technology students must seek programs in non-dental environments. This separation does not encourage interaction of technicians and dentists.
- ✚ Dental laboratory technician certification issues.
 - The perceived value of certification is low. Most people do not know that dental technology exists or that there is a certification board.
- ✚ Offshore dental laboratories.
 - Dentists cannot easily communicate with technicians thousands of miles away from their dental practices and do not know if their laboratory prescriptions were interpreted correctly by the offshore
- ✚ Dentist/laboratory technician interaction.
 - Many students in both technology and clinical dentistry have no interaction with those in their counterpart profession during their educational period.

Possible Solutions for Dental Laboratory Conflicts

Solving the Problems:

- ✚ Dental laboratory educational programs and recruitment.
 - Public awareness of dental technology should be increased.
 - Standardization in curriculum content should be developed.
 - Education in clinical dentistry and dental technology should be integrated.
- ✚ Dental laboratory technician certification issues.
 - The value of certification should be increased.
 - Technician certification should be made mandatory.
 - A registry list should be made of all technicians, both certified and non-certified.



- The necessity of formal education in dental technology for certification should be emphasized.
- ✚ Offshore dental laboratories.
 - The concept of prostheses as medical devices should be enforced.
 - Prostheses' manufacturers should be identified.
 - The use of 510(k) materials should be ensured.
 - Delivery of the dentist's prescription should be ensured.
 - Barriers to offshore laboratory work should be evaluated.
 - Offshore laboratories should not dilute U.S. resources.
- ✚ Dentist/laboratory technician interaction.
 - The perceived value of dentist-technician interaction within the ADA, dental schools and the dental technology community should be increased.
 - A viable relationship should be created between dental students, dental educators, dentists, dental technicians and patients.
 - A "baseline" standard of care should be developed for dental technology.