



## **Prosthodontic Career Considerations**

Dental schools train their graduates to restore single teeth with crowns, or to replace missing teeth with short-span fixed or removable partial dentures. Implant training is often limited to simple implant restorations. In a post-graduate prosthodontic program, students learn to treat patients with advanced dental needs.

Prosthodontists serve as the architect of the dental treatment plan and are able to collaborate with other dental specialists, general dentists and other health professionals to develop predictable solutions for the patient's dental and oral health needs.

### **Improving Smiles**

Studies show that many people are unhappy about the look of their smile, with 25 percent of Americans saying their smile and/or teeth is the one facial feature they would change to boost their self-esteem.

The advanced specialty training that prosthodontists receive makes them experts in improving appearances by restoring broken, discolored, mal-positioned and/or misshapen teeth. A better smile and improved oral function can greatly improve a person's self-image and quality of life.

Prosthodontists are extensively trained in:

- assessing existing tooth position and contour
- color analysis/selection
- esthetic tooth anatomy/contouring
- esthetic dental materials selection
- tooth bleaching, bonded veneers and esthetic ceramic inlays, onlays or crowns for single teeth; and fixed partial dentures or dental implants.

Prosthodontists receive advanced training to utilize these techniques in simple and complicated multi-specialty treatment plans. Prosthodontists take great care and pride in using their advanced training and knowledge of materials technology to provide their patients with the ultimate in esthetically attractive and natural-looking restorations.

### **Replacing Lost Teeth**

The completely edentulous individual is perhaps the most severely debilitated patient of all, having lost all of their teeth, significant amounts of underlying bone, and personal self-confidence.

Most dental schools provide a sufficient number of denture patients to adequately train graduating dentists in how to treat simple Class I and II denture patients, while others have made complete dentures an elective course or eliminated it from the curriculum altogether. Prosthodontists receive the necessary training to treat the advanced denture patient (including Class III and IV.)

Prosthodontists have the knowledge to evaluate all relevant factors needed to treat patients requiring an advanced level of care.

### **Dental Implants**

About 73 percent of Americans say that they would feel self-conscious if they lost even one tooth.

All prosthodontic training programs require that their graduates receive training to the proficiency level in restoring several types of dental implants to replace missing teeth.

Prosthodontists are trained to:

- Serve as the leader in implant diagnosis and treatment.
- Determine where the teeth need to be positioned at the completion of treatment.
- Direct the oral and maxillofacial surgeon or periodontist about the position and number of implants to optimize the treatment outcome.
- Restore the implants that are placed in unfavorable positions.

Prosthodontic training programs are expanding the experiences in implant surgery to a greater degree. The postgraduate prosthodontic student will have the opportunity to learn the surgical placement as well as the restoration of dental implants.