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Complete Maxillary Restoration with Industrially Milled Custom Abutments

There are several reasons why patients in their prime put off dental restoration which has been necessary for quite some time already. By then, many teeth have already been lost or are not worth keeping, and the existing prostheses can no longer be used. The way in which complete maxillary restoration in such a situation can satisfy the patient's desire for a quality of life "comparable to that of natural teeth" is illustrated here by presenting a real case.

Introduction

In cases where the remaining dentition is sparse, treatment with implants presents an option worthy of consideration. Ultimately, the final result not least depends on what the patient wants. Usually the solution falls somewhere between a "maximum solution" involving complex "backward planning" and bone augmentation (possibly using material taken from the patient's pelvis) or a "minimal solution" with prosthetics supported primarily by the mucous membrane. Thus, the case described here is also an example of a "minimal solution" involving a typical problem seen regularly in dentistry.

Case History

The 56-year-old patient came to the praxis and expressed the desire to restore his sense of taste and ability to chew his food again as in the past. For many years he had lived with temporary solutions because he could not find the time to complete the dental restoration. But the patient had finally reached a point where he no longer wanted to put up with it – if for no other reason alone than his friends and acquaintances frequently mentioning it to him. The medical history made it particularly apparent that the clasped denture he had been wearing for many years was a problem (Fig. 1). He kept postponing a final restoration with an anterior bridge, which led to the clasps causing an elongation of the canine teeth. The teeth had also shown noticeable discoloration. After examining the tooth mobility and the x-ray, the dentist overseeing treatment determined that the three remaining natural teeth were anchored solidly enough in the periodontium that they could be used as abutments in a telescopic dental prosthesis. During the consultation the patient therefore decided for this option, which involved using four implants to provide additional support for the telescopic bridge.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

However, the patient declined to undergo jawbone augmentation, which should always be considered to ensure ideal positioning of the implant. Based on the decisions made during the consultation, the first step taken at the practice was the insertion of four implants in the regions of teeth 21, 12, 15 and 25¹. An impression of the intraoral situation was then taken in order to prepare a prosthodontic model (Fig. 2). Customizable abutments were selected due to the large shift in the palatal direction in relation to the dental arch. The first step in manufacturing these is to use plastic substrates (Straumann® Wax-up sleeves) as modeling aids that are attached to the laboratory analog (Figs. 3, 4), covered in light-cure acrylic (primopattern, primotec, Bad Homburg/Germany), thereby preparing the four implant superstructures (Fig. 5). Next, the scan is performed and the data then transferred to the Straumann production centre.

Using the plastic model, the abutments were then transferred to zirconium dioxide and each element is delivered to the laboratory within 78 hours (Fig. 6). Using its own CAD/CAM system, the lab had already prepared the primary telescop-

ing element for the natural teeth. Next, they undergo a gentle post-processing and polishing while being cooled with water (Fig. 7). The gold secondary caps are then galvanized (Heli-form HF 600 from Hafner, Pforzheim/Germany) using silver lacquer (Fig. 8). A fine gap is modeled over this, using wax as a placeholder for the adhesive. Then the tertiary construction is modeled with light-cure acrylic. Using the traditional casting process, it was subsequently made out of a model casting alloy (Fig. 9). In order to build the interim prosthesis for the patient, the saw model, with the primary elements attached and including the bite registration, was scanned using the lab's own CAD/CAM system and then milled out of PMMA plastic (Fig. 10). The treating dentist first cemented the zirconium dioxide primary structures to the natural teeth (Fig. 11), performed a final check of the bite after curing for about four minutes and then screwed the synOcta® abutments into the implants. Each of the custom abutments was then screwed in. In a second step, the galvano caps were cemented, stress-free, to the tertiary construction in the mouth (Figs. 12, 13). After taking the bite registration again, the construction was reshaped to fix the cemented tertiary structure in its exact

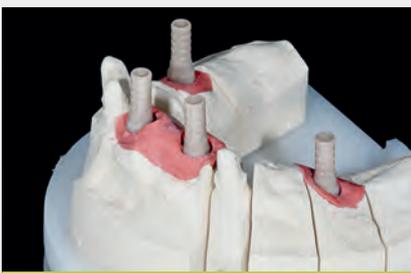


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

position in the patient's mouth (Fig. 14). Figure 15 shows the complete prosthodontic impression for the modeling of the situation in the laboratory. The patient was able to leave the practice with his temporary PMMA plastic prosthesis ("travel prosthesis"). Next, the prosthetic teeth, including the individual gingiva sections (Gradia from GC, Leuven/Belgium), were created in the lab. The patient seemed satisfied with this final restoration (Figs. 16, 17).

Discussion

The work discussed here made it possible to restore the patient's chewing function and to achieve an attractive esthetic outcome: After eliminating the discolorations on the teeth, the longstanding neglect of the patient's dental situation is no longer visible. On a psychological level, it is important for patients to have their own teeth used as a natural support for the prosthetic construction. Thanks to their white color, the primary crowns contribute to this confidence and have a positive effect on real situations in one's day to day life too. To illustrate this once again, consider the following example: The patient walks out of the bathroom in the morning and has

not put in his telescoping construction yet, but his wife does not notice see a "metal jaws affect" in his mouth but rather the natural colors red and white.

Under ideal conditions it would probably have been possible to design a fixed dental prosthesis instead such as two implant-supported bridges and a tooth-supported bridge in the anterior region. Because the patient declined to undergo bone augmentation that would have been necessary for this, this option was out of the question from the outset. Still, the results achieved with this solution are pleasing and, most notably, will stand the test of time over many years. If, for example, one of the three natural pillars is lost, it can be replaced by an additional implant. The existing telescopic bridge can continue to be used with this scenario, needing only to be reground at the appropriate position. The method of tension-free intraoral cementing (Dr. Paul Weigl, Uni Frankfurt) used in this case proved generally advantageous. This involves using the mouth as a second master model of sorts, in which the CAD/CAM primary constructions can be cemented into their final positions.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

The second step was then to cement the model-cast tertiary structure and secondary structures made of galvanic gold. Compared to conventional methods, this method achieves a better accuracy of fit. The industrial manufacturing of the abutments with the CAD/CAM method also contributed to this outcome. The degree of precision made possible here was one of the main reasons the author decided for this production method. The technical process for preparing the abutments with the plastic (wax-up sleeve) modeling aid also played a role since the transfer into zirconium dioxide is 1:1, thus making it possible to create exactly the shape that was modeled. The synOcta® system, which involves working on the gingival level, is highly reliable because the implant can be fixed into place in eight different positions – ensuring a

fit that is nearly always perfect. Thanks to the precision and high success rates for dental technicians and dentists, the costs for the off-site production of the custom abutment in the lab, which at first glance will make a considerable financial dent in one's budget, become relative when considering the total package. In addition to the milled abutment, this also already includes a metal screw for the elevation of the gingival level and an additional screw for fixing the abutment into place.

Conclusion

The case presented here has demonstrated how even where the dental situation has been neglected for many years it is still possible to restore chewing function and esthetics in



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

a way that is realistic for the patient both in terms of time and money. This is an example seen frequently in practice: Despite sparse remaining dentition, the patient wants the least complicated treatment possible if, indeed, he does opt for an implant solution. This particularly means forgoing augmentative measures. This situation often places special demands on the laboratory. Even in the case of implants that have a less-than-perfect position from a prosthetics standpoint, it is imperative that a functional as well as esthetically satisfactory prosthodontic solution be realized.

The combination of custom abutments with the precision of industrial manufacture and the Weigl method for tension-free cementing that has been presented here can be recommended based on the experience of the author as a concept promising success.

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¹ 12/15: Straumann® Soft Tissue Level Implant Standard RN 4.1 mm, 12 mm SLActive und 21/25: Straumann® Soft Tissue Level Implant Standard Plus RN 4,1 mm, 12 mm SLActive.



Fig. 16



Fig. 17