

Chairs (Cheers!) for the future

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A wobbly chair, loose joints and no longer really safe to sit on. Can the situation be remedied? All the instructions agree, to be really effective the joints should be taken apart, the surfaces cleaned and then carefully re-glued into their correct relationships. Taking a chair apart is not as easy as it may sound, despite the joints being loose! There are hidden nails placed by a crafty carpenter, sometimes the adhesive holds tenaciously, there is the risk of fracturing the struts. When joints are obstinate and refuse to let go, one answer is to introduce as much adhesive as possible into the existing joint, working the loose components to force the glue into the recesses, but that result is never as good as having an open and clean joint with which to work, offering security for the future. Now let's sit confidently!

We all have our favourite chairs, and we all have our favourite techniques in the practice of Dentistry. However, if we simply continue to sit unconcerned and are not professionally alert, the joints in our approach to our patients and their problems may also become slack and indeed may be in danger of coming apart. Repair and maintenance are thankfully close at hand and indeed the pages of this issue offer some valuable glue. But there is an additional advantage, for the chair is not now dependent on glue derived from the hooves of animals but on advanced technological developments.. and practitioners today have an array of options far ahead of the solutions which have served for many previously quiescent years in Dentistry. We learn in this issue how centrifuged blood may contribute most effectively to healing by concentrating the appropriate biological factors in the area. We are exposed to analyses of epidemiology that are so improved that confident and far reaching conclusions may be drawn on the statistical results. We learn how implants, that great advance in restoring function, have brought a new disease process, peri-implantitis, with which the alert practitioner must cope. We consider how the challenge of providing dental care to the population may be eased by the training of further therapists. And that paper introduces an aspect pertinent to Women's Month, for the number of Dental Therapy students are nearly equally divided by gender, a far cry from the gender distribution in Dentistry of a few years ago. When I entered Dental School (and I shall not disclose how long ago that was, but, a considerable time!) there was but one female dental student in the Faculty. How different the classes today!

Current statistics tell a story, as at 2nd August 2018, South Africa had 6456 dentists registered by the HPCSA, of whom 2,543 are female. Student figures reflect the change in gender balance, there are 1489 registered students, of whom 934 are female, 63% of our students are female.

The FDI has a Section of Women Dentists Worldwide. Their Executive Board has representatives from several countries, but from Africa only one and she is from Egypt. The Mission of the Section is to:

- coordinate the activities of national groups
- promote the collection of information about women dentists and their pattern of working
- address inequalities where they exist
- facilitate contacts between women worldwide
- enhance their full participation in all branches of the profession.

SADA would be applauded for the recent appointment of another female to the prestigious role of President. Women's Month exemplified!

The analogy of likening the repair of wobbly chairs to the consolidation of advancing dental knowledge may be a little cumbersome, but consider, sometimes it is only necessary to make a slight adjustment in our approaches – just inject a little glue into the joint, but on other occasions a complete mindset change is essential .. a cleaned, separated joint ready to be assembled for enhanced further performance! We should prepare our "chairs" for modification and enhancement at the forthcoming SADA Conference!

We can be confident that as we move ahead into the future, the Presidential Chair is well structured and that our President will ensure it does not suffer wobbly joints.

