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Atlas of Complications and Failures in Implant Dentistry

Guidelines for a Therapeutic Approach



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*This book is not dedicated to one person alone, but to many people:
to my wife, Maria Giovanna, who has never tired of waiting for me;
to my children, Giuseppe and Ludovica, who are tired of waiting for me
because they want me to spend more time with them;
to my mother, Elena, and my brother and sister, Julia and Francesco: they
are there for me, and I am there for them – and always will be;
to all my wonderful family.
Lastly, to my father, Giuseppe (who truly has written a lot of books), who
has always supported me in all things, including this book.*

L.G.

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Foreword

This book fills a need that is completely different from those of traditional texts that set out to summarize or describe success rates for successful osseointegration in oral rehabilitation.

It is based on a more naturally rational approach, that of describing and detailing errors and failures with the aim of preventing or minimizing the impact of new procedures on the human body.

Despite the fact that long-term clinical studies demonstrate the reliability and predictability of treatment in edentulous patients, there remains a great need for prophylactic measures to continue to reduce margins of error and their consequences.

This result can be achieved only through a conscientious and painstaking process of describing and analyzing problems observed in the short and long term.

The author's aim of reducing the clinical incidence of avoidable errors represents an opportunity to optimize treatment outcomes and reduce the number of complications in the short and long term.

This approach makes this work uniquely important in helping to achieve the almost impossible undertaking of optimum osseointegration and osseoperception in the rehabilitation of patients with oral disabilities.

As far as philosophical approaches to health protection are concerned, it is sometimes more important to give a conscientious and rigorous account of problems and failures than to list success rates.

P-I Brånemark

Preface

One should never begin the preface of a book by recounting an anecdote, but I am unable to resist the temptation. I have a very clear and vivid memory of a convention that was organized in Florence at the beginning of the 1990s by one of the leading dental implant companies at the time. The aim was to look at progress in the field and to discuss the results of implant treatment. The list of topics included the subject of complications, handled by Federico Gualino, a well-known and highly regarded colleague who is rightly considered an expert in the subject and is also a practitioner and researcher of value. He started out by saying, with a considerable amount of wry good humor, that he was grateful for the honor bestowed on him but that because he had already been asked to do the same job twice before (this was the third time!) he would not like to think that his name would be forever associated with complications, as though he had a special knack for them.

This incident is a good example of the fact that talking about complications is certainly not the greatest aspiration of those who seek to raise awareness of the subject.

As far as I see it, one even more important consideration is involved in this case. For the very reasons I mentioned earlier, expert practitioners and researchers of acknowledged value must deal with the topic of complications for two good reasons.

First, so that the reader is not led to believe that the complications discussed are the result of inappropriate and deficient practice but are instead an exception to the rule in any human endeavor, particularly if it is complicated. As long as complications are contained within a commonly accepted or acceptable percentage it is therefore legitimate to consider that they can be the outcome of natural human fallibility, of stretching therapy to its limits, or even of fate. Because complications are the opposite of success, it is also difficult to believe that anyone would wish to be associated with them.

Second, it is reasonable to assume that the number of complications increases in direct proportion to the number of cases treated. Practitioners who treat a substantial number of patients are certainly among the most expert and qualified members of their profession and therefore backed by a very extensive case sample with the associated proportion of complications, meaning that their experience makes it easier to treat and recognize complications at the outset. I therefore believe that a practitioner's experience is a key factor when it comes to handling complications. While the treatment of diseases and medical and surgical practice benefit from the rigorous and schematic organization of knowledge, the situation in the specific field of complications is less clear-cut. This is all the more true for a relatively new subject such as implant dentistry, particularly one that has undergone such a difficult birthing process. The problem is often made more intricate by the phenomenon described by cascade theory, whereby a catastrophe is almost always caused

by several contributing causes or by a series of negative events that are not necessarily connected.

It is clear, in any case, that complications must be discussed with courage and above all with humility, in order to pool as much data as possible and provide information on their causes, nature, and treatment.

This book has come about as a result of many years of intensive clinical experience and is strongly narrative in form, drawing inspiration from the conventions of oral communication. It examines complications by discussing clinical cases that have actually been treated. The aim is thus to offer practitioners a reference book that serves as a guide for diagnosis or treatment and also, more importantly, to provide them a code of conduct and a philosophy that can be applied when approaching the problem.

Luigi Galasso

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