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Prosthetically driven dental implant therapy: Dream or reality

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Osseointegrated implants have been successfully used for retaining or supporting dental prostheses in the past 5 decades. However complications and failures could be high if they are not placed based on prosthodontic design concepts. Many implantologists simply find the ideal locations for dental implants based on assessment of bone volume and quality, totally ignoring the design for the definitive prostheses. They are dreaming for the miracle with technician's hands. This lecture focuses on prosthetically driven approach in implant therapy. The optimal prosthodontic plan needs to be established before implants are placed, not after. The plan should be based on patient's desire, systemic medical conditions/medications, local anatomical factors such as bone and soft tissues, biomechanics, risk factors, material selections as well as patient's financial conditions. Dental implants can be used for both fixed and removable prostheses. Dentists should not focus on fixed options only (profit driven) since many patients can function well with removable prostheses, especially with additional support and retention from dental implants. Dentists should consider the least number of implants when fewer implants can be used to achieve similar results. These decisions should be based on evidence from systematic reviews or randomized controlled clinical trials, rather than expert's options.

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