

Is Your Dentist Conservative?



by William J. Schlotz, D.D.S.

Minimally Invasive—Conservative—Dentistry (MID) is not practiced by the majority of dentists according to standards set by the World Congress of Minimally Invasive Dentistry. As I go about my practice of conservative dental treatment, I am often asked why more dentists don't respect the philosophy of MID.

In this (and my previous) article I am offering up rationale (see previous article for reasons #1,2) which, I believe, helps to answer this question.

3. More technically demanding dentistry... In short, MID is tougher to learn than traditional dentistry. A case in point would be the treatment of an Onlay vs. Crown. An Onlay (when indicated) is a far more conservative method of protecting a fractured tooth than a crown. However, preparing and bonding an Onlay is far more technically demanding than cutting and cementing a crown. Onlay treatment performed by a less than competent operator can be frustrating for all involved.

4. It's EXPENSIVE (to the dentist) to practice MID... Although ultimately LESS COSTLY for the patient, MID can run up the bill for the notoriously penny-wise DDS. A technically demanding Onlay carries stiffer lab fees than conventional Porcelain/Metal crowns. Moreover, purchasing the technology (Lasers, etc) required to practice conservatively balloons overhead.

5. Significance of newer concepts not quickly grasped... As a new technique or technology emerges, few (hopefully insightful) pioneers begin a movement. The importance of which, in subsequent years, eventually becomes apparent to the DDS masses-- who then opt in.

Dentists who are not practicing minimally invasively are, in politically correct terms, dental leftists. And, Caveat Emptor: Liberal is not desirable when cutting teeth is the issue. Conservative dentists, on the other hand, take the time and effort to respect and save natural tooth structure, which they believe, is vastly superior to even the best artificial restoration. In this context, count me a proud, yet lonely, 'right winger.'

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