

## Editorial

# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON DENTAL AESTHETIC TRENDS

IN RECENT YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASED AWARENESS AND DEMAND FOR ESTHETICS DENTISTRY. PLATFORMS LIKE INSTAGRAM AND TIK-TOK SHOWCASE CELEBRITIES AND INFLUENCERS WITH BEAUTIFUL, NEAR —PERFECT SMILES MAKING PEOPLE MORE CONSCIOUS OF THEIR DENTAL APPEARANCE. THERE HAS BEEN A SURGE IN DEMAND FOR TEETH WHITENING PROCEDURES, VENEERS AND ALIGNERS. THERE ARE APPS THAT ALLOW PEOPLE TO SEE HOW THEY LOOK WITH PERFECTLY ALIGNED, WHITE TEETH. SOME DENTAL PRACTICES HAVE STARTED OFFERING DIGITAL SMILE MAKEOVERS, BEFORE ACTUALLY PERFORMING PROCEDURES.

ONE FACT THAT OFTEN REMAINS OVERLOOKED IN SUCH TRENDS IS THAT SOCIAL MEDIA FILTERS OFTEN ENHANCE AND MODIFY SMILES, GIVING USERS UNREALISTIC IDEAS REGARDING THE CONCEPT OF THE PERFECT SMILE. THE PRESSURE TO MATCH THESE IDEALIZED IMAGES THEN GENERATE THE NEED FOR DENTAL VISITS IN PEOPLE. SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO DEVELOP DENTAL DYSMORPHIA, A DISORDER VERY SIMILAR TO BODY DYSMORPHIA, WHERE A PERSON WHILE HAVING VERY HEALTHY TEETH, MAY FIND THEM TO BE POTENTIALLY UGLY.

SEVERAL DIY (DO IT YOURSELF) TRENDS, HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY POPULAR. THESE INCLUDE AT HOME CHARCOAL USE TO WHITEN TEETH, SELF FILING OF TEETH TO ELIMINATE JAGGED EDGES; THESE MAY CAUSE MORE HARM THAN GOOD IN THE LONG RUN. OTHER FADS LIKE OIL PULLING, THOUGH ENTIRELY UNSUBSTANTIATED BY SCIENCE, ARE GAINING TRACTION.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME ADVANTAGES OF THESE ESTHETIC TRENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS WELL. SOCIAL MEDIA HAS REVOLUTIONIZED DENTAL AESTHETICS AND MADE COSMETIC DENTISTRY MORE MAINSTREAM. IT HAS PROMOTED DENTAL TOURISM TO COUNTRIES LIKE KOREA, TURKEY AND INDIA, WHERE DENTAL TREATMENTS ARE MORE AFFORDABLE. DENTAL PROFESSIONALS TOO, IN RECENT YEARS HAVE STARTED TO RELY HEAVILY ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ON PROPER ORAL CARE AND THE VARIETY OF DENTAL PROCEDURE AVAILABLE. ANALYTICAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE PROS AND CONS OF VARIOUS DENTAL PROCEDURES ARE AVAILABLE ON DIFFERENT PLATFORMS AND CAN BE VIEWED ANY TIME BY AN INDIVIDUAL SEEKING TREATMENT

AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT MAY BE SAFELY CONCLUDED THAT SOCIAL MEDIA HAS A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON ALL ESTHETIC TRENDS, INCLUDING DENTAL. AS LONG AS THE PROCEDURES ARE DONE WITH PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE AND CONSULTATION, THESE TRENDS CAN BE HARNESSSED FOR COMMON GOOD. HOWEVER UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ALONG WITH THE BLIND PURSUIT OF UNACHIEVABLE ESTHETIC STANDARDS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE MORE HARM THAN GOOD IN THE LONG RUN