

Editorial

Ergonomics in dentistry

The term Ergonomics refers to the study of an individual's efficiency in his working environment. It also refers to the very act of designing or arranging workplaces, products and systems so that they fit the people that use them. With reference to dentistry, the optimal therapeutic approach and the success of practice involve appropriate



working conditions for the dentist and his team in an ergonomic environment. Musculoskeletal disorders are among the most common medical problems affecting at least 7% of population. These are injuries that arise from repetitive work, awkward posture, heavy lifting etc. Dentists around the globe remain at a very high risk for such problems due to the nature of their work. This happens to be one of the greatest health hazards facing the entire dental community. Unfortunately, these are the kind of occurrences that force the body in unhealthy postures that sooner or later lead to musculoskeletal disorders. Carpel tunnel syndrome is another condition that stems out from the body functioning in uncomfortable positions that extend for long time spans. All experts including OSHA agree that the only way of preventing such work related musculoskeletal disease is ergonomics; the very science of making the environment conducive to the worker.

The answer to these sorts of problems is definitely not deducting the number of working hours, though this is exactly what many dentists end up resorting to. The risk and perspective of the musculoskeletal disorders related to unbalanced postures should determine that the dentist take postural corrective actions to limit the negative impacts. It becomes imperative for the dentist to correct the ergonomic problems in the operatory, strengthen specified muscles, to resolve any major trigger point, and consult therapists in case a problem arises. Although dental institutes thoroughly train students regarding the proper significance of ergonomics, it remains up to the dental professionals to realize that a good posture does not require a major investment but a rethinking of the method of working, to deliver good patient care, all the while keeping themselves away from bodily harm.