



Patients Need Pampering

Pratitee Shah*

Dr. D.Y. Patil University, Navi Mumbai, India

***Corresponding Author:** Pratitee Shah, Dr. D.Y. Patil University, Navi Mumbai, India.

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The concept of Dental Spa is matured and there is sophistication involved with it that makes the dentists want to transform their practice into a facility which would give an overwhelming experience to the patients, all over the world.

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new".

- Socrates

In 18th century England, a female dentist offered dental treatment with skin and body care, inkling of Dental Spa. The term though, was coined in late 1990's. An 'International Dental Spa Association' was formed by Dr. Lynn Watanabe, DDS in 2002 in USA. By 2007, one in every 20 clinics in USA had ingested dental spa in practice, however currently it seems very difficult to determine the number of dental spa in USA as its description is very broad.

The dental spa offers spa-like services in addition to dental solutions. We say 'spa-like' as it is not restricted to beauty alone, it includes any amenities that help calm down your patient like:

Complimentary offerings	Chargeable treatments
Food and beverages, juice bars	Non-surgical face-lift procedures - Botox, Derma Fillers and i-PRF
Heated, aromatherapy neck wraps or neck pillow and eye/forehead pillow, lumbar pillows	Facials and microdermabrasion (exfoliation)
Fleece blankets to cozy up in the dental chair	Reflexology (body massages)
Overhead chair-side TVs with the remote in the patients hand/3D visual goggles	
Soothing music or headphones	
Scented aromatherapy candles	
Massage chairs in the reception area	
Mini spa treatments like hand/feet, head/neck massage, Paraffin wax hand treatments	
TMJ massages (relaxes the TMJ and reduces pain post treatment, also helps in TMD and headaches)	
Baby sitting and kids toys/ play area	

There is a noticeable imbalance between the 2 sides of the table, but a part of complimentary has more or less become mandatory for patient comfort and other, if introduced would be an add on for

the clinic. On the other hand, even though the chargeable are less in number, they are technique sensitive but considerably add to the profit.



Figure 1: Neck pillow, heated aromatherapy hand towels.



Figure 2: Paraffin wax hand station.

In the early days, there was some experimentation with offering traditional massage and facials alongside dental services. But the dentists who tried, found that people would rather go to a real spa to relax. Also, there are dermatologists who offer BOTOX and dermal fillers; so patient wont specially come to a dentist for a cosmetic facelift, but while consulting for a smile design we have to cross convert the patient.

Benefits for the dentist: Patients, irrespective of gender and age, would enjoy and appreciate a pampering experience as these services reduce anxiety levels, making it easier to treat the nervous

ones. Instead of having a patient in the waiting room, you can keep them occupied in a way which would destress them and this could become the USP of your clinic. It would potentially become a popular idea among the NRI patients leading to the introduction of Dental Tourism in your practice.

Since beauty is an integral selling point for a cosmetic dentist, to introduce the spa concept will prove highly beneficial. Charges for the dental treatments at these facilities are also considerably higher as compared to the conventional clinics. Also the chargeable spa treatments like full facials, microdermabrasion, full body massages, Botox, derma fillers, can add to your earnings.

Current scenario: A lot of dentists do make their patients feel comfortable, so the fact is you may already be a spa-like practice. But the question is, do you wish to upgrade to a much more elaborate Dental Spa? Some of the factors involved to transform are:

- **The location of your practice/patient base:** If a patient is unwilling to pay for a root canal, he/she is surely not getting a spa done, so you really need to know your patient base.
- **Your collaboration with spa professionals:** Botox and derma fillers are becoming very popular, for which you don't need a beautician, but you would, for a manicure, pedicure, facial or microdermabrasion.
- **The investment and the space management:** The non-surgical facelift procedures you can perform on the dental chair, but for spa treatments you need a separate room.

In India, few clinics have already transformed, where some mean it literally, most of them refer it to the personal comfort and service concepts of Dental Spa for their patients, without calling it that. They are spread all across the major cities - Agra, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Delhi, few cities in Kerala, Goa and many more. A dentist in Ahmedabad uses a vibromassage on dental chair whereas cosmetic dentists in Mumbai provide Botox treatment. Apollo White Dental has the concept of dental spas, studios, clinics and express (each one with a different concept).

Since BOTOX and Dermal fillers are the most common procedures that can be performed in office by a dentist himself, let's talk about it in a little more detail. They are used to correct the wrinkles on the face to give a younger, fresher look in addition to defect corrections.

What causes wrinkles?

As we age, the elastin and collagen levels in our skin reduce throughout our lifetime, leading to formation of lines on the face.

Types - Static (which stay even without any expression on the face - e.g. forehead, crows feet, nasolabial folds) and Dynamic (they appear when there are expressions like frowning and laughing or smile lines - they are best if not corrected completely).

Under correction is always better and safer than overcorrection in order to avoid the artificial look. One should be conservative, softer changes are natural.

Basic difference between the two is, Botox works on the muscles and fillers are injected in the skin.

BOTOX



Figure 3

Botox is botulinum toxin, attained from bacterium *Clostridium botulinum* and related species. It is a neuromodulator and blocks signals from the nerves to the muscles (paralysing the muscles). The injected muscle can no longer contract, which causes the wrinkles to relax and soften. So, it decreases the wrinkles by decreasing motion.

It is most often used on forehead lines, crow's feet (smile lines at the corner of the eye) and frown lines (glabellar region), gummy smile and masseter hypertrophy, can also be used for TMJ pain and associated migraine(still under research).

A very fine needle is used for this almost painless procedure which takes approximately 10 minutes. The product has a lag period of about 4 - 10 days for the onset of action and the wrinkles

to smoothen out. You can expect the results to last between 2 - 6 months depending on your body's metabolic system. After this time, the effects wear off and your muscles return to normal activity and movement.

Bruising and/or pain at the site of injection might be noticed in some cases. There is a risk of drooping of the eyelids and eyebrows but corrects itself within a few months.



Figure 4: BOTOX for gummy smile - as you can appreciate the correction is achieved by relaxing the elevator muscle of the upper lip.

Dermal fillers

Dermal fillers act as 'volumisers' and are used for correction and contouring. They are injected in the skin using a micro canula which fills up the lost volume by adding a layer. Filler lifts and plumps up the skin to soften the lines.

They are used to restore areas that have lost volume over time like the lost cheek volume, strengthen the chin, define jawline, get rid of dark circles, filling out thin lips, highlighting the cheek bones, nasolabial fold, marionette lines and crows feet area. The wrinkles in the lower part of the face are best treated with Dermal Fillers.

The procedure takes about 30 - 60 minutes depending on the areas to be covered. The results are immediate and expected to last between 3 -18 months, again depending on body's metabolic rate and type of product used. Repeated injections may help stimulate body's natural collagen production that will help reduce the number of lines and wrinkles. Also less filler is needed to achieve the same look after few repeated sessions.



Figure 5: Dermal Fillers - before and after. (left) Nasolabial fold (right) Lips.

Bruising and lumpiness are the common side effects which can be decreased using a micro cannula. Swelling can be noticed for 2 - 4 days, which will settle by itself. Artificial look can be avoided by being conservative and vascular injury can be avoided by complete knowledge of anatomy, careful injection and micro cannula.

The first filler was developed in 1980's from collagen derived from cows. Fillers have come a long way since then. Currently the most popular is Hyaluronic acid (a glycosaminoglycan), which is a jelly like substance naturally found in a human body - in eyes, joints and skin. It absorbs water like a sponge and acts like a lubricant and a shock absorber. There are different types of fillers, reversible and non-reversible. Let's look into ones which are widely used:

- **Restylane:** A Hyaluronic acid based filler, gel in the consistency of jelly. It is firm yet mouldable. As it is hyaluronic acid, it is a reversible filler.
- **Juvederm:** Again a Hyaluronic acid filler. Available in a clear gel form, and has a spongy bouncy feel. Widely used for mid face, chin and cheek bones, not for under the eye. The effects last for about 2 yrs and is reversible
- **Radiesse:** Contains Calcium Hydroxyapatite and is a white paste. Its is good for cheeks and chin but not lips or under the eye. Its effects last for about 12-15months and it is a non-reversible filler.

The reversible can be modified at the time of the treatment and even later, which gives more control and options to the doctor as well as the patient. Hylenex is a liquid that contains hyaluronidase which neutralises the hyaluronic acid filler, dissolves it and converts it into water which gets absorbed in the system immediately. Using reversible is far advantageous than the rest.

In non-reversible fillers, they could be either temporary (Radiesse and Sculptra), where you can't modify once placed but their effects will wear off in 1.5 - 2 yrs or permanent like fat or artificial.

According to Dr. Ellen Marmur, MD dermatology, injecting dermal filler into different levels of the dermis is like piercing a hole into a pressurized system. The extracellular matrix holds the filler in place. It requires refilling every time the effect gradually disappears, for three to five treatments until it stimulates the body to build its own collagen.

Procedure: A local anaesthetic cream is applied to the area before the treatment. Also, most dermal fillers have Lidocaine within the product thus reducing swelling and ensuring a comfortable treatment. After that the product is injected subcutaneously to physically fill and plump out the line or area of concern. Different techniques can be used like serial puncture, linear threading or fern method. The product helps in stimulating the formation of natural collagen. While injecting it is important to adhere to the right plane. If a filler that should be placed superficially is injected deep, it just diffuses in the deeper plane requiring larger volumes to fill the defect and also results in faster resolution. Denser fillers when injected superficially lead to lumpiness and blanching. If lumping is seen, moulding should be done immediately till the lump is flattened and the blanching is reversed.

Fillerina Dermo-Cosmetic Filler for at home use is also available in the market for patients. No injections are required in this. The difference in the effects would be like those in, in-office bleach and home bleach.

Fillers and botox in combination

Combining fillers with botox is a new rejuvenation paradigm. Since the hyperactive muscles play a prominent role in producing wrinkles, it is better to relax the muscles first with the botox, and later administer fillers after 2 weeks. However, for the nasolabial groove, fillers are injected first and then the botox.

PRF - Platelet Rich Fibrin



Figure 6

PRF is derived from the patients blood in the very same appointment, hence it is the safest procedure. Fibrin helps with

collagen formation, regulate the inflammation and increase the speed of healing process They are of 2 types i-PRF (injectable) and A-PRF (Advanced). They are both obtained by centrifuging and the middle segment is fibrin. The only difference is:

- **A-PRF:** A glass tube or silicon coated tube (red knob) is used. The contact with silica surface is required to activate the clotting cascade before placing in the centrifuge. It is a thicker condensed platelet rich fibrin in the middle layer. a- PRF is widely used to accelerate soft and hard tissue healing.
- **i-PRF:** A plastic tube (non-silicon coated - orange knob) is used where the cascade doesn't start and PRF stays mixed with the media so when you spin it at that rate of 3000 rpm for 10 minutes the fibrin is still in the solution and you can suction it out in the syringe. It is always better to use PRF along with the fillers as it cannot give volume to the skin but it helps in natural collagen formation to give better long lasting results. Having said that, it can be used singly for fine wrinkle lines for collagen rejuvenation. The effects can last 6 months.

	Neuromodulators	Derma Fillers	i-PRF
Source/content	Botulinum toxin	Hyaluronic acid (most widely used)	Patient blood
Brand names	BOTOX	Juvederm, Restylane	-
Mode of action	Paralyse/relax the muscle	Fills up the volume	Collagen formation
Areas	Forehead, crows feet	Nasolabial folds, lips, dark circles	Fine wrinkles
Other dental/medical use	Gummy smile, masseter hypertrophy, migraine	Black triangle (gingival embrasure)	A-PRF – implants (with bone grafts), extraction, perio flaps.
Onset of action	4 - 10 days	Immediate	2 - 3 weeks
Reversible/non- reversible	Non-reversible	Reversible and non- reversible	-
Effects lasts till	3 - 6 months	3-18months	6months
Side effects	Brow drooping, bruising	Lumpiness, bruising, swelling, looking fatter	None



Figure 7

Who can do the these procedures?

DCI has not laid down any specific guidelines but any medical/dental practitioner who has the license to inject can do these procedures. Also we as dentists have learnt a lot about facial anatomy and structure, it becomes easier to understand the cosmetic and therapeutic applications of these procedures better.

Where do you take formal training from?

1. Dr. D.Y. Patil School of Dentistry offers a fellowship course, by Dr. Mohan Thomas. But only MDS (oral surgery) can apply.
2. ILAMED is a sister institution of the University of Griefswald, Germany taking certificate course.
3. Courses conducted by practitioners like Dr. Ritika Arora.

Crux: After knowing all the aspects you need to analyse if you wish to transform into a full dental spa or just spa- like practice. Having said so, it is highly recommended you offer the maximum comfort and pampering experience to your patients. They shall keep coming back (of course, when clubbed with unmatched quality of dental work)!

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