



Does the Treatment Cost Dictates or Diverts The Dental Treatment Plan?

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Received: July 19, 2018; **Published:** August 14, 2018

Abstract

Dentistry is a branch of medical science where maximum biocompatible materials have been used. These materials being expensive causing the overall dental treatment cost at a higher side for the patient when compared with other medical treatments. In the clinical scenario, the dentists have to provide various treatment options including material choices to the patients and then the patient is at the will to choose among the provided options. Usually affording patients opt for the best treatment options whereas, economically backward patients opt for other treatment option or material. Ultimately the cost becomes the major deciding factor for both the doctor and the patient in the dental treatment planning.

Keywords: Dentistry; Treatment Cost; Dental Materials

Abbreviation

RCT: Root Canal Treatment

Dentistry is a blend of art and science. Every dentist work to meet patient's satisfaction, patient's oral health as well as their own living-hood. As dentistry is more of material oriented science, every material dictates it's need for its longevity and performance. Various materials in dentistry are used for different purposes in some or the other form and proportion. These biocompatible materials are usually more expensive compared to the materials used in other health care sectors. Ultimately the burden of the cost is diverted to the patient's pocket.

In the public dental health care sector, as the patients are offered dental treatment either free or at the nominal charges. The cost of the treatment is borne either by Government, Trust or any NGO or any funding body. Thus in this sector the treating dentist could see the best possible treatment option for the patient; as the cost of dental materials, technology or dentist's fees are covered by the funding body. Whereas, in a private dental care set up, the treatment plan with different treatment options has been made by the dentist and cost would be explained to the patient. It is up to the patient as they would be the ultimate authority to decide which treatment plan they have to follow regarding their health and the treatment cost.

In underdeveloped or developing countries, majority dental materials are being exported as there are few local productions are available. The material when reaches the dentist the overall cost becomes almost double. Using that high-quality material becomes expensive for the dentist and finally to the patient. Using

substandard materials compromises the quality of the treatment and causes loss of faith in the dentist.

As in a routine case with endodontically involved painful tooth, treatment would be either root canal treatment (RCT) or extraction of the offending tooth. A financially stable patient may opt for the RCT whereas the patient with low socioeconomic strata may opt extraction as treatment of choice due to the poor economy. Though we are in the noble profession, as a human being we also have responsibilities and have to live to satisfy our basic needs by our professional work as a dentist. Thus, charging reasonable fees for our skills, materials and knowledge is worth all the time [1,2].

Conclusively, the cost has been a major deciding factor in the dental treatment plan and it cannot be overlooked.

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Volume 2 Issue 9 September 2018

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