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Determining the Best Treatment Option for a Patient

Timothy Kosinski, DDS, MAGD

An 82 year old white male presented with controlled hypertension and no other significant medical findings. There was an existing prosthesis of splinted crowns #'s 4-13, with a pontic in the #13 area. Examination revealed significant decay under the splinted crowns of the maxillary right and left central incisors [figures 1-2]. The remaining splinted crowns appeared to be in good function.

The maxillary prosthesis was opposed by a removable partial appliance, supported by two natural teeth #'s 27 and 30 and a single implant with a Locator abutment in the #22 area.

Evaluation

Determining the prognosis of the significantly decayed roots of teeth #8 and 9 was essential. Since the remaining abutments were in good repair, it may seem obvious that the existing splinted bridge case needs to be sectioned and the crowns over the maxillary central incisors removed.

Assuming, as was the case, that the maxillary central incisors were no longer restorable without the minimum treatment of extensive root canal therapy, crown lengthening and fabrication of new crowns, it was determined that the roots would be extracted.

With an anterior edentulous space, conventional treatment options considered could include a removable partial denture, removal of the other abutment crowns and re-fabrication of the splinted restoration #'s 4-13, with two new pontics, or what some would consider less conventional, the placement of single dental implants in the #8 and #9 areas.

Implant Consideration

Dental implants have become an important method of restoring missing teeth with function and esthetics. Our patients are requesting and even demanding this type of therapy. Our modern materials and methods have made implant dentistry predictable with long term positive prognoses.



Fig. 1: Digital radiograph illustrating significant subgingival decay under the maxillary right and left central incisors.



Fig. 2: Facial view of decay which extended completely through the crowns #'s 8 and 9.