



Installation night celebration! (left to right) Theano Mentzelopoulou, NYCDs President Ioanna Mentzelopoulou, New Dentist Committee Chair Jaskaren Randhawa, Board Member Michelle Lee, Member Stacy Spizuoco, President-Elect Mina Kim, Vice President Suchie Chawla, and Secretary Vera Tang.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Ioanna G. Mentzelopoulou, DDS

Editor's Note: Following is the speech delivered by Dr. Mentzelopoulou at the Installation of Officers in April.

As your newly installed president of the New York County Dental Society, I want to talk to you about success. My success is a direct result of encouragement from many people, and there are two people I would like to single out.

Dr. Steve Gounardes, speaker of the house at NYSDA. He was my attending in the hospital while he was president of the Second District Dental Society. I remember being in the operating room with him and he was reading to me from the parliamentary procedure book that I thought was useless at that time. He kept telling me how important it is to learn how to run a meeting and I never understood why!

Dr. Reneida Reyes, my first boss in Brooklyn who hired me out of dental school when she wanted to run for the General Chair position of the GNYDM. She was instrumental in bringing me to meetings of the board of the Second District Dental Society which I served. She believed in organized dentistry and she understood that new dentists need to get involved right out of dental school in order to keep them close to the profession.

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Continuing Education

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Who Matters

Mitchell Rubinstein, DMD Education Director



My dental school's media lab was nearly empty, and the screen in front of me was playing a worn videotape (yes, videotape... this was 1989) of a CE program on anterior direct composites. I was just a 2nd year dental student and brand new to the clinic, but I was eager and curious, as dental students often are. One of my instructors suggested checking out this particular video. She said it had improved her own technique, and also her understanding of the complexities of anterior esthetics. These recordings were not part of the official curriculum, but they were available to anyone who wanted to check them out. As I watched, I could tell the clinician in the video was someone I wanted to learn more from. He clearly enjoyed his subject. He never seemed to be talking down to his audience. His confidence and the depth of his knowledge were both intimidating and inviting. Even though my clinical experience was non-existent at this point, I had learned something important. Who you learn from is just as important as what you are learning. The clinician in the video was Dr. David Garber. Since that evening in the media lab, more than 30 years ago, I have heard Dr. Garber speak at least half a dozen times, on topics as diverse as Surgery, Implants, Prosthodontics or Veneers. We even brought him here to NYCDS, at the invitation of our past President, Dr. Jim Jacobs. Each time I listen to Dr. Garber, I come away not only with clinical pearls and techniques, but also an increased awareness of what it means to be "successful" in this amazing profession of ours.

As NYCDS Education Director, I frequently speak to dentists about the types of courses they'd like to see. Younger dentists always ask me what they should be learning, what kinds of courses they should be taking,

and what they should be doing to improve their skills. Should they learn how to place implants? Get better at Endo? Orthodontics? Digital dentistry? Sleep apnea treatment? My answer to all of these generally begins "Yes, but..."

There are endless opportunities for Continuing Education. Our email inboxes are constantly bombarded with course offerings from every corner of the dental universe, promising us financial success and professional advancement. But with every email I delete I become more convinced the path to success in dentistry lies in who we choose to learn from. I see, unfortunately, courses taught by people I would not want to learn from. They might be too arrogant, or perhaps too rigid. Some spend too much time talking about themselves, others might lack respect for their audience.

In our education program here, I'm constantly thinking about who we are learning from, not just what we are learning. Mostly, I look for clinicians that I enjoy being around. I look for clinicians who are the kinds of dentists I think we need more of. Our recent full-day hands-on program on indirect inlays and onlays is a perfect example. The instructor was Dr. David Rice, someone I have always enjoyed listening to. If you have a chance to attend one of his courses, just do it. I think the attendees of that course would agree that Dr. Rice fills the room with positivity. His lectures are extremely well organized. He takes every student seriously, and he welcomes challenging questions with good humor and spontaneity. The course was a great success, and you can be sure I will be inviting Dr. Rice back in the future (see article on page 9).

I invite all of you to think more about who you would like to learn from, and which dentists you would want to be more like. Who do you admire in this profession? This might not seem like a critical question in choosing a continuing education course, but I believe that it is. If you can figure that out, then you'll know everything you need to know.

MEETING DATES

NOVEMBER 25 - 30, 2022

EXHIBIT DATES

NOVEMBER 27 - 30, 2022

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(continued from page 1)

Towards that goal, we had a collaborative event with NYU College of Dentistry to initiate a virtual mentorship opportunity for the students during their third year of dental school and the private practitioners throughout NYC to answer questions and give an opportunity for a connection. We are planning for an in-person event during the summer months.

I was in Washington DC for the ADA Lobby Day and the most powerful story was student loans and the post-graduate educational debt. The average student loan amount now is \$308,000 and that is not from Columbia or NYU. The amount is much higher for these institutions in the city. It is even more important to be supportive to all our new dentists and give them as many resources as possible to help them transition to private practice no matter what that model of practice they choose to be. Our lobbyist at the ADA emphasized the importance of collaboration between young and seasoned dentists so that there is continuity in the profession, understanding of the ongoing issues that affect the profession, and a better advocacy voice.

A little more personal information about me. I was born and raised in Athens, Greece. I learned from a young age that you can fail on what you don't control or want, so you might as well take a chance on doing what you love.

I went to college at NYU College of Arts and Sciences not knowing much about the U.S. educational system but somehow, after working hard, I managed to learn the language and get accepted into the NYU College of Dentistry. While in school, I worked in different offices of the university trying to make ends meet. I wasted no time. I got my doctor's degree and pursued a GPR where I met Dr. Gounardes. One of the first things he said to me was: What are you doing here? Go back to Greece where your family is! As you can imagine, I dismissed his comments. I wanted to live the dream of being in NYC, living life as a young person, carefree doing what I loved.

After I completed a pediatric residency program at Interfaith Medical Center I worked for several years in a number of different offices trying to figure out my next move. However, I had a goal; I had a vision. I had a purpose in my dental career. I wanted to treat my patients a certain way. I knew what I wanted from day one. I wanted to do it with love. It was fun from day one going to the office to treat kids.

There was no Plan B. I had no doubt I was going to be successful no matter what I accomplished. All my energy

was put into Plan A. No safety net. As always I made a full commitment to whatever I put my mind to: my job, my life, being your president.

Michael Jordan, the G.O.A.T. of basketball said "I am successful but I have missed 9,000 shots in my career." I have failed 9,000 times. I cannot tell you standing here that I have not made mistakes or that I have not failed. Everybody fails. It is OK. What is not OK, is if we fail and stay down. If we fail, we get up, we fail and we get up. That is the winner. Go out and give everything you got. I take this seriously, especially as the president of the New York County Dental Society.

I know that the effect I have on others is the best currency I have in this life. My strength and determination can only inspire young dentists that are faced with so many issues, like student debt, multiple career choices, and personal choices.

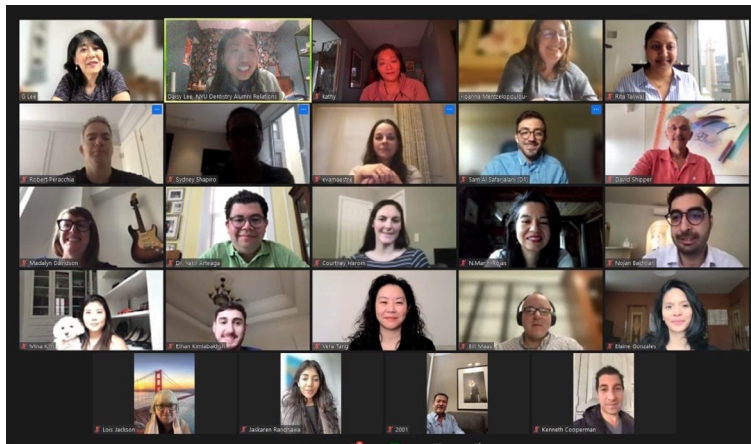
I am privileged to have a career in dentistry that I love and now being your president, I feel lucky. This presidency could have happened earlier in my career but it is sweeter now having my daughter experience it with me. I feel extra lucky and privileged.

I have a lot more non-dental people to thank. First and foremost I have to thank my family in Greece. My two sisters

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Virtual Mentorship Mixer

NYCDS held a virtual mentorship mixer in late April with NYU Dentistry Alumni Association where NYCDS members shared insights on working in the dental profession with the next generation of dentists.



Metaverse, NFT's, Crypto and Web 3.0

New dentists were welcomed back to NYCDS headquarters in late April with a social event that also featured a talk on emerging technologies, led by Martin Yang, senior analyst covering emerging technologies and services for Oppenheimer & Co., Inc. Mr. Yang addressed the gathering via video and provided insights into the complex 3-D world known as the metaverse that is just starting to gain wider adoption. He explained how life will be “lived” in the metaverse and the use of blockchain technology to establish identity, ownership, and a shared digital currency. It was an eye-opening introduction to a virtual world that is in its infancy. Everyone appreciated the chance to connect with one another and learn about the virtual world of the future, the companies and technologies that are leading the way, and get many of their questions answered. Hear firsthand what our expert had to say, below.



Savvy Social Media Tips with the City's Top Dental Influencers

The New Dentists Committee continues to hold innovative programs! Members and non-member dentists came to NYCDS on May 18 for another great night of mixing and mingling followed by a special panel program. Three dental influencers, Drs. Todd Hanna, Andi-Jean Miro, and Jennifer Plotnick, generously shared their expertise on how to grow a social media presence for a dental practice. It was helpful for attendees to hear the best strategies to increase engagement, the importance of humor, and where to draw the line between personal and professional. The value of taking case photos to critically evaluate your own work and track your growth, regardless if they are posted online, was emphasized. The energy in the room was great, with lots of engagement and positive feedback. Be sure to follow us on social media @NYCDS622 so you don't miss the next great event!



New dentists came to mingle and get some social media pointers.



Social media panelists (left to right) Drs. Andi-Jean Miro, Todd Hanna, and Jennifer Plotnick with moderator and New Dentist Committee Chair Jaskaren Randhawa.

NEW DENTIST VOLUNTEER EVENT

Take a Break From Dentistry!
Volunteer to Prepare Meals for Those in Need

Sun, July 17, 10 am - 1 pm (3 hours)
Group Kitchen Project / 15 volunteer openings
166 Avenue of the Americas, NYC

Volunteer in the God's Love We Deliver kitchen with the guidance of staff chefs. Tasks may include: packaging meals, chopping onions, making meatballs, ladling soup, peeling potatoes, scooping baked goods, or preparing fresh herbs.

Just a few openings are left! Sign up [HERE](#)



ONE NIGHT AND TWO SPECIAL EVENTS

Installation of Officers and April General Membership Meeting



NYCDS had an eventful evening on April 4. The annual Installation of Officers, typically held in January, was postponed in light of a winter surge in Covid cases. The Installation was at the Society's offices with a limited audience prior to the April General Membership meeting. It was the first event held at NYCDS headquarters in over two years, which made it special for everyone. Dr. Steven Gounardes, NYSDA Speaker of the House and Dr. Mentzelopoulou's former residency director, was the installing officer. Special guests in attendance included NYSDA President Kevin Henner, ADA Trustee Paul Leary, Suffolk County NYSDA Trustee Guenter Jonke, New York County NYSDA Trustee Maurice Edwards, GNYDM 2020-2021 General Chair James Doundoulakis, and GNYDM 2022-2023 General Chair Richard Oshrain.

President-Elect Mina Kim presented Dr. Lorna Flamer-Caldera with a gift recognizing her four years of volunteer service to the Greater New York Dental Meeting. Dr. Irvind Khurana, who wasn't present at the event, was also recognized for his four years of volunteer service to the GNYDM. Dr. James Doundoulakis was recognized for his work as the 2020-2021 Greater New York Dental Meeting Chair. Soon after, Vice President Suchie Chawla thanked Dr. Kenneth Klonsky for his six years of service on the Society's Board of Directors, and Dr. James Jacobs for returning for an additional year of service as past president.

Installing Officer and NYSDA Speaker of the House Steven Gounardes (left) with President Ioanna Mentzelopoulou, and Past President James Doundoulakis.

As Installing Officer, Dr. Gounardes spoke about how proud he was to install his former resident, and shared memories of when they first met. Dr. Mentzelopoulou shared her appreciation for being able to hold her Installation in person and the support of the many people who helped her achieve her goals. It was an especially sweet moment for her to be installed as president with her young daughter Theano beaming in the audience. Outgoing President Lois Jackson spoke about the challenges of taking over the presidency in early 2020 and leading the organization for not just one, but two years, during one of the most challenging times in our history. You can read both of their speeches on pages 1 and 10, respectively.

Congratulations to our 2022 Officers: President Ioanna G. Mentzelopoulou, President-Elect Mina C. Kim, Vice President Suchie Chawla, Secretary Vera W.L. Tang, Treasurer Andrew S. Deutch, and Immediate Past President Lois A. Jackson. It was a long, but worthwhile, wait to celebrate!



Dr. Mentzelopoulou with her beaming daughter Theano.



NYCDS 2022 Officers: (left to right, front row) Immediate Past President Lois Jackson and President Ioanna Mentzelopoulou. (Left to right, back row) Vice President Suchie Chawla, President-Elect Mina Kim, Treasurer Andrew Deutch, and Secretary Vera Tang.



NYCDS President Ioanna Mentzelopoulou (center), and NYCDS Secretary and NYU School of Dentistry Professor Vera Tang (second from right) are surrounded by NYU dental students (left to right): Jonathan Wang, Miriam Ahmad, Jonathan Tai, and Rebecca Maawad.

ONE NIGHT AND TWO SPECIAL EVENTS

The April General Membership Meeting, shared with members via Zoom, began immediately following the Installation of Officers. Dr. Amr Moursi, professor and chair of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry at the New York University College of Dentistry, gave an enlightening lecture on Behavior Guidance for Today's Parents. Dr. Moursi is on the Medical Staff at the New York University Langone Medical Center and the Bellevue Hospital Center in New York and he is the 2022 president of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

Dr. Moursi looked at family trends and how those changing dynamics impact dentistry. The lecture focused on the evolution of parenting styles; how parenting styles impact children's health; and how to adapt interactions with children based on the temperament of the child and a parent's specific behavior with their children. He looked at the factors affecting changes in parenting styles such as marrying later and having children later in life. Dr. Moursi proposed that once dentists are aware of the new parenting approaches they can adapt better and still provide the highest level of care, while acknowledging some of these changing parenting styles. Making an assessment of a child's temperament and the parenting style involved allows for customized patient care – it's not one size fits all – particularly with children. He ended his lecture by providing some behavior management approaches for dealing with children with a variety of temperaments and special healthcare needs.

Many thanks to The Smilist and MLMIC for their sponsorship of this special evening.



Top: Dr. Steven Gounardes presenting a state Proclamation (or "Plaque-lamation" as Dr. Gounardes called it) to Outgoing President Lois Jackson for her outstanding contributions to the Dental Society.



Bottom: Special guests (left to right) 2022 GNYDM General Chair Richard Oshrain, Suffolk County NYSDA Trustee Guenter Jonke, ADA Trustee Paul Leary, and NYSDA Speaker of the House and Installing Officer Steven Gounardes.

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and my mom, who supported all my crazy ideas throughout the years and let me live my dream although they had millions of objections. My uncle, who is not alive anymore, but believed in me when I told him at the age of 16 that I was going to become a dentist and he made things happen for me so I could come to the U.S.

My dental school classmates of the class of '99 NYU. Dr. Minerva Patel and many more who became family and the reason I am president today. Thank you to all of you, and the board members of the New York County Dental Society, and the members of the many nominating committees who voted for me throughout the years.

Thank you to my executive committee who is always ready to help in any way possible. Past President Dr. Lois Jackson, stepped up her game in the past two years and navigated the difficult waters of the pandemic, closures, and uncertainty. It was not only difficult but at times impossible to manage and our meetings became our support system throughout these very difficult times. Thank you Lois from the bottom of my heart. You did an outstanding job and I have big shoes to fill.

President-Elect Dr. Mina Kim, is always ready to help in any capacity and is a great person to have as a support system. My Vice President, Dr. Suchie Chawla, sees things from another angle and helps navigate deep waters as only an oral surgeon can do. Secretary Dr. Vera Tang, has been my very good friend since our dental school days. I am always amazed by her strength in navigating the world of academia full-time and private practice. Treasurer, Dr. Andrew Deutch, became my friend and helps us navigate the future financially and beyond. He gives a voice to dentists who can feel unheard.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my New York family; my daughter Theano, Kiran, Dr. Michael King, and the staff of Pediatric Dental Associates of Manhattan who have been supportive of my dreams and goals throughout the years. Especially my loyal assistant Daisy, whom I have worked with my entire career after dental school.

I also want to say something about my partner at Pediatric Dental Associates, Dr. King. His job is a comedian and dentistry is a side job as he says. Eighteen years later, we are still going strong with lots of laughs and ups and downs. I want to publicly acknowledge his unconditional support throughout all these years and thank him from the bottom of my heart. Thank you, Mike.

Thank you everyone – we are moving forward together.



Eric Ploumis **Joel Greenberg**

We've Moved!

Eric J. Ploumis, D.M.D., Esq. and **Joel M. Greenberg, Esq.** have joined Rivkin Radler's Health Services Group where they will continue to focus on providing exceptional legal services for dental professionals.

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Motivating Webinar on Taking Control of Your Life

We were pleased to have Casey Gocel, a partner with NYCDS Corporate Friend Mandelbaum Barrett, share how she managed to take charge of her life which was spiraling out of control. In her webinar on *The ONE Thing: The Story of How One Book Can Change Your Whole Life*, held in late March, Casey shared her personal journey that led her to read a bestselling book that changed her life. Feeling overwhelmed by home and work demands, she started doing just one thing differently; one thing that made everything else in her world easier or unnecessary.

The presentation highlights the importance of allocating your precious time to maximize your main goals. By focusing on the “one thing” that you need to do to achieve your larger goal, everything else falls into place. Casey demonstrated how she was able to tame competing demands, dial down her stress level, increase productivity, and find the time to focus on what matters most to her.

Take the time to watch the webinar below and learn how to implement change and live life on your terms once you determine your “one thing.”



Continuing Education Highlight

David Rice, DDS, brought a unique hands-on course to NYCDS on May 18, which was the first clinical hands-on course at NYCDS in more than two years. Sponsored by Ivoclar and DMG America, “Prep, Place, Profit: When Partial Coverage Wins” offered attendees a predictable, step-by-step process for inlays and onlays. Dr. Rice is the founder of the nation’s largest student and new dentists community, igniteDDS, and he maintains a restorative and implant practice.

Dr. David Rice inspecting hands-on practice at NYCDS’s first hands-on course in over two years.

NYCDS New Dentist Recognized by the ADA



NYCDS Member Dalal Alhajji (top left) is recognized by the ADA.

The ADA 10 Under 10 Award honors dentistry's rising stars: dentists who are making an impact in the profession less than 10 years after graduating from dental school. Congratulations to NYCDS member Dalal Alhajji for being selected to this distinctive recognition. The leader of dental oncology at New York University College of Dentistry, Dr. Dalal Alhajji is an advocate for how personalized dental care contributes to the overall health of patients with cancer.

Dr. Alhajji received her Doctor of Dental Medicine in 2014 at Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine. After dental school, she completed an ‘Advanced Education in General Dentistry’ residency at Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, where she also earned her Master of Science in Dentistry degree in Oral Medicine. Dr. Alhajji is one of the few practicing dentists in the United States who completed a fellowship in Dental Oncology from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in 2019. She is a faculty member at the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Radiology, and Medicine at NYU Dentistry, where she supervises students across three clinics. She offers instruction and mentorship to students over a wide scope of dentistry procedures on individuals with physical, cognitive, and developmental disabilities.



OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Lois A. Jackson, DDS
Immediate Past President



Synergy is an interaction or cooperation giving rise to a whole that is greater than the simple sum of its parts. The term synergy comes from the Greek word *synergia* from synergies, meaning "working together."

This is a fitting way to begin my Outgoing President's speech on the day that Dr. Mentzelopoulou will be installed as president. January 23, 2020, was our last in-person installation. In the following few weeks, unexpected events occurred: the passing of our President Luis Fujimoto and the Covid-related shutdown. This was an inflection point for me. It became both an obligation and an opportunity.

The obligation was to provide our members – actually the entire dental community – with the information and help that was needed to deal with urgent issues, professional and personal. But it was also an opportunity to spotlight the value of NYCDS and organized dentistry. Through emails, webinars, virtual meetings, and answering members' phone calls, we were able to fulfill this obligation. We even secured free PPE for our members. And we provided a platform for state and national leaders in dentistry to speak directly to our community.

All this happened through synergy – a great team effort. This is how we got through the difficult times and how we continue to go forward.

So thanks are in order. Thanks to our staff for becoming information specialists, Zoom masters, and more. Our Executive Director Diane Laurenzo was the guiding force. In the face of this crisis and the financial implications, she provided the plan to get us through the moment and into the future. She set us on a steady course with an eye to better times.

The Executive Committee: Ioanna Mentzelopoulou, Mina Kim, Suchie Chawla, and Vera Tang. A history-making group as the first all-women executive committee in NYCDS history. Thanks to Jim Jacobs who agreed to serve one more time as past president. They are all exceptional leaders who were great partners in all our efforts. Andrew Deutch, welcome to the table.

Thank you to our board members whose experience and expertise aided in our efforts.

To David Shipper, our trustee and a direct line to NYSDA. Thank you for always being available for advice and information. And to Maurice Edwards, our current trustee, who has provided important updates on NYSDA and other matters.

Thank you to The GNYDM organization committee, troubleshooters, advisory committee members, Executive Director Robert Edwab, General Chair James Doundoulakis, and Chair-Elect Richard Oshrain. Together, they were able to organize a virtual meeting in 2020 and an in-person meeting in 2021 which provided NYCDS with operating funds.

To the chairs and members of our committees. Volunteerism is a special kind of giving; thank you for volunteering your time and talent. And thanks to all of you who donated to our capital campaign, served on a committee, volunteered at the GNYDM, or offered a suggestion, etc., for being part of our road to recovery. Finally, my husband Michael Gerstein, my in-house counsel, a source of practical advice and critical thinking. My sounding board, discussing ideas on our long drives to the Berkshires...thank you.

My message throughout has been one of hope and optimism with a dash of realism. We were able to be back together again in person to celebrate the installation of a new president and officers. This was part of my hope. I also hope that we were successful in providing our community with the information they needed. I am optimistic that we will all do well in this new normal, but I am realistic that it will take some time and hard work. I know that this year's officers are ready for whatever challenges occur. I wish them well and will continue



to help in any way I can. I call myself a pandemic president – I hope that I rose to the challenge. Thank you.

Dr. Jackson (right), Immediate Past President, with President Dr. Mentzelopoulou (left).



Henry Schein: Rely On Us

NYCDS is pleased to announce Henry Schein is now a Corporate Friend. Henry Schein is a solutions Company for health care professionals powered by a network of people and technology.

Henry Schein offers the industry's most comprehensive selection of consumable products, equipment, services, and value-added technology solutions to optimize dental practice management and deliver the highest quality patient care. The Company is committed to providing its customers with the value-added solutions they need so they can focus on operating efficient practices and providing a high quality of care.

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- ✓ **State-of-the-Art Equipment** to improve efficiency and enhance the patient experience
- ✓ **Leading Practice Management Software** to drive increased patient traffic and greater patient engagement.
- ✓ **Expert Practice Services** to help manage and grow your business
- ✓ **Innovative Specialty Products** to drive revenue growth through expanded clinical services
- ✓ **Supply Chain Excellence** to get you the right products, in the right place, at the right time

For more information about Henry Schein Dental, please visit henryschein.com/dental, email Ronnie Klein at Ronnie.klein@henryschein.com, or call 917-656-0922. They look forward to hearing from you!

**The 6th Annual NYCDS Golf Outing
Benefiting the NYCDS Fund
Sponsored by Henry Schein
Tuesday, June 21, 2022**

There are a limited number of golfer openings left – register today!

[Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains](#)

For \$325 single or \$1,300 foursome you will receive: a round of golf on a beautiful, newly renovated course, a sumptuous brunch, an open bar cocktail hour, raffles, and a fantastic buffet dinner.

There will be a Putting Contest for a \$10,000 cash prize and a Hole-in-One Contest for \$25,000 cash, plus other contests with prizes.

If you can't get away for the day or don't play golf, you can join everyone for the cocktail hour and dinner only.

Click on the link below to learn more and reserve your spot!

[NYCDS 6th Annual Golf Outing](#)

Treatment of the Worn Dentition

Leora Walter, DDS

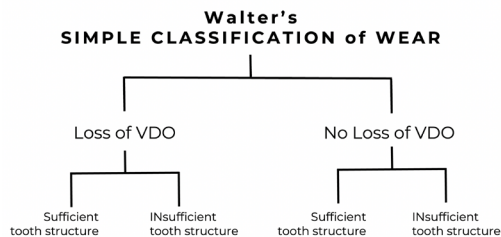


Leora Walter, DDS, maintains a private practice in New York City and is the Course Director of Prosthodontics and Clinical Attending at Woodhull Hospital. She lectures nationally and internationally on topics related to the worn dentition, ceramics, and implant restorative dentistry.

Wear of the occlusal surfaces of teeth is a natural process that occurs throughout a person's lifetime. Excessive wear, however, can cause a treatment conundrum for the restorative dentist. How to treat, when to initiate treatment, and the extent of treatment leaves many patients and their dentists wondering what is appropriate.

A number of indices have been presented to help the clinician analyze their patient, however, none are simple to follow. Some require the patient to have worn their dentition solely by erosion¹ or solely by wear². Others require a tooth by tooth or surface by surface analysis of the wear, while others require the wear to be limited to just the anterior teeth³. Regardless of which index is used, none are convenient, most are complex, and many require interpretation.

As a result, I propose a new way to efficiently analyze the worn dentition and treat these patients who are in need of our help. It is a two-step process that consists of (1) evaluating the vertical occlusal dimension (VDO) and (2) evaluating the teeth (*Image 1*). Once these factors have been assessed, understanding how to treat your patient becomes simple.



(Image 1)

In his classic article published in 1972, Turrell outlined nine methods to determine VDO in the edentulous patient, however all are empirical and lack scientific support. He admits that clinical judgment prevails when deciding VDO and implores the dental community to create an accurate

scientific method of assessment. Nearly half a century later many of these methods are still in use; the most popular of which are esthetics and phonetics.

It is easy for us to look at patients either from their profile or frontal view and to determine whether or not they've lost their VDO. Patients who have lost VDO have a chin that is autorotated, appear to be in a class 3 malocclusion, and their labial commissures are collapsed (*Image 2*). If we can't seem to tell a difference, then their VDO has remained the same (*Image 3*).

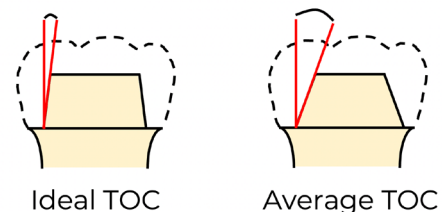


(Image 2)



(Image 3)

The next step of my classification system relates to the teeth. Does the patient have enough tooth structure for retention and resistance of the restoration? In another now-classic article published in 2001, Goodacre outlined proper tooth preparation dimensions: 10 to 20 degrees of total occlusal convergence (TOC) (*Image 4*), minimal occlusocervical



(Image 4)

dimension (height) of 4mm for molars and 3mm for all other teeth, and occlusocervical to faciolingual dimension (height to width ratio) of 0.4 or greater. He discusses how to adjust the preparation when these features are missing by including grooves or boxes or submerging the finish line. Without an ideal preparation, mechanical, biologic, and esthetic success cannot be guaranteed⁴.

This is of utmost importance when restoring the worn dentition. We need to ensure the longevity of our restorations. Adhesive dentistry has blurred the lines between retentive

preps and the power of a cement to maintain restorations. Depending on your practice philosophy, both treatments work, however, when dealing with a patient who is a bruxer, I have more confidence relying on the tooth structure and the preparation rather than on an adhesive.

As such, here is my proposed classification system to analyze the worn dentition: (*Image 5*)

**Walter's
SIMPLE CLASSIFICATION of WEAR**

1. No loss VDO ~ Sufficient tooth structure
2. Loss of VDO ~ Sufficient tooth structure
3. Loss of VDO ~ INSufficient tooth structure
4. No loss VDO ~ INSufficient tooth structure

This classification system is similar to other systems where the first category is the easiest or best and as we continue in the system, it gets more difficult or worse. The first 2 categories have sufficient tooth structure. This is the easiest form of worn dentition to treat. No auxiliary methods are needed for the teeth. They can simply be prepped and crowns can be delivered.

In category 2, however, there is a loss of vertical dimension and the doctor needs to re-establish proper vertical dimension. This is when we go back to our complete denture knowledge and think about esthetics and phonetics. What is appropriate for our specific patient? And then create a wax-up accordingly.

The last two categories are more difficult to treat. Patients in these categories have ground their teeth, aka worn their dentition. These patients require auxiliary methods to maintain restorations. We can box or groove the preps or crown lengthen those teeth whose restorations would otherwise not be retentive. For patients who have lost vertical dimension, no prep on the occlusal surface is needed as the restorative material can sit on the worn occlusal surface reestablishing their VDO.

It is the category 4, the no loss of VDO with insufficient tooth structure, that is the most challenging. We can certainly prep the teeth with grooves/boxes and we can crown lengthen to make the prep more retentive, but where do the restorative materials go? We know that ceramics need less bulk than porcelain fused to metal but even if we use the strongest material as thin as possible, we still need space!

If we place zirconia restorations we need at least 1mm on the occlusal table if it's completely flat. Once we start adding anatomy, these occlusal surfaces become thicker. If we have occlusal material on the maxilla and mandible, we need a minimum of at least 3-4mm of restorative space! How do we create this in our patients who have not lost vertical dimension?

Looking again at the literature, Abduo's 2012 systematic review analyzed the implications of opening VDO. He concluded that indeed opening VDO is safe and predictable and any negative effects were self-limiting⁵. This gives the restorative dentist confidence that an increase in VDO is not harmful as has been ingrained from our training. Patients who present in category 4, can now have space created for them by having their VDO increased. It is important to note, however, that though we now have evidence-based dentistry supporting the increase, esthetics may be severely compromised by doing so. In a patient who has not lost vertical dimension, opening their vertical may make them appear unesthetic as well as create a lip insufficiency not allowing them to close their mouths.

Another alternative is to extract all of the teeth and place implants. By doing so, bone can be planed and restorative space gained. Restorative space is of utmost importance and too frequently overlooked. If there is no space to place restorative materials, then we need to somehow create it. This method of treatment should not be perceived as aggressive because there simply is no other alternative. The only thing left in these patients' mouths are excellent tooth roots and usually supraerupted alveolar bone. This is the best scenario for implant placement.

Regardless of which category the patient falls into, understanding etiology is key to ensuring a successful outcome. If the etiology was due to attrition, the occlusal scheme should have been worked out in the provisionals to ensure that the final outcome will be accepted. An occlusal guard is prescribed and advised to be worn both at night and during the daytime as needed. Botox is suggested as an adjunct to reduce the masseter's strength. With erosion, a nightguard is not needed but an understanding of acidic habits and its subsequent reversal is key. A toothpaste with stannous fluoride is helpful as this tin rich deposit is less susceptible to dissolution than hydroxyapatite. Abrasion habits must be discussed and eliminated.

Treating the worn dentition can be stressful if not planned appropriately. When using this new classification system and analyzing VDO and the teeth in a two-step process, patients can easily be placed in one of the 4 categories and subsequently treated with confidence.

¹Eccles JD. Dental erosion of nonindustrial origin. A clinical survey and classification. *J Prosthet Dent* 1979; 42:649-653.

²Smith BG, Knight JK (1984) An index for measuring the wear of teeth. *Br Dent J* 156:435-438.

³Vailati F, Belser UC. Classification and treatment of the anterior maxillary dentition affected by dental erosion: the ACE classification. *Int J Periodontics Restorative Dent*. 2010 Dec;30(6):559-71.

⁴Goodacre CJ, Campagni WV, Aquilino SA. Tooth preparations for complete crowns: an art form based on scientific principles. *J Prosthet Dent*. 2001 Apr;85(4):363-76.

⁵Abduo J. Safety of increasing vertical dimension of occlusion: a systematic review. *Quintessence Int*. 2012 May;43(5):369-80.

Peer Review

What Peer Review Has Taught Me

Barry Sporer, DMD

Chair, Peer Review and Quality Assurance Committee



This year ends my tenure as chair of Peer Review and Quality Assurance for NYCDS, but my involvement in Peer Review will continue as chair of NYSDA's Council on Peer Review and Quality Assurance. So rather than describe a case we reviewed, the outcome, and how we got there as I have done in the past, I would like to discuss why Peer Review is important to our component, the profession, and the community at large.

By offering the Peer Review process to member dentists, we have given the patient and dentist an efficient way to resolve a dispute. For the patient who may be seeking damages that may not be sufficient to warrant a lawsuit, Peer Review is the ideal venue. The advantage the dentist gains is that it limits the damages to the amount of money paid for treatment provided. There are no settlements for pain and suffering or need for subsequent treatment. It puts the case to an end, avoiding a frivolous lawsuit or a complaint filed with the Office of Professional Discipline. So even when a Peer Review judgment is in the patient's favor, the dentist has won. Our malpractice insurance rates have remained reasonable partly because we have been successful in policing ourselves. Furthermore, Peer Review elevates the status of our profession by demonstrating to society that we care.

"The overriding lesson I have learned over the years is to be kind to your patients and be kind to yourself. Doing so makes dentistry less frustrating, much more rewarding, and truly enjoyable."

Finally, I would like to point out that many of the cases we see are the result of poor communication. We practice a very difficult profession. In clinical practice, if you do a procedure that has a 95% success rate, in 5% of cases you may have 100% failure. A poor outcome does not necessarily mean poor treatment. We often see cases where a dentist is conservative to a fault. For example, trying to save a tooth with a guarded prognosis or replacing an anterior crown in an over-closed

bite rather than committing the patient to a full mouth reconstruction to open the bite. In these cases, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. It is important that you explain to your patient your rationale for a conservative approach, and that you both have a clear understanding as to who bears the financial responsibility for these decisions. You would be surprised how many patients will understand that.

The overriding lesson I have learned over the years is to be kind to your patients and be kind to yourself. Doing so makes dentistry less frustrating, much more rewarding, and truly enjoyable.

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Wed, July 13, 2022 | 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Check-in with www.nycdentalsociety.org as new courses will be added for the fall in the coming weeks.

Happy Pride Month! NYCDS acknowledges the historical significance of Pride, which began right here in New York City after the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, and we'd like to honor the sacrifices, achievements, and contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals throughout this month. We are proud to celebrate our LGBTQ+ members!

