

The Liquid Dentist

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The title of this reflection is based on the philosophy of Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman (1920-2017). Nowadays, according to Bauman, relationships between individuals - of all kinds, personal or professional tend to be less frequent and lasting. The famous phrase "relationships slip through the cracks of your fingers" can be interpreted in various works such as "Liquid Modernity" (2000), "Liquid Love: On the Fragility of Human Bonds" (2003), "Liquid Life" (2005) and "Liquid Times" (2006).

When writing this reflection, I came across the following situation in the title: "The Liquid Dentist" or "Liquid Dentistry"?

"The Liquid Dentist". I'm mainly criticising the new generation of professionals who are being brought up in these new moulds of modern society.

Luckily, "Dentistry is not liquid". We must consider the constant evolution of Dentistry and Dental Medicine. Beginning with our procedures as barbers and practical dentists, Dentistry has evolved a great deal over the years. Great discoveries, such as Horace Wells (1815-1848), considered the "Father of Anaesthesia", Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen (1845 - 1923), discoverer of X-rays, or Per-Ingvar Branemark (1929-2014), discoverer of Osseointegration and hundreds of other discoveries that have favoured Dentistry and our patients should be praised. How long, hard and labour-intensive was it to achieve the results? Logically, dental science has evolved at the costs of a lot of dedication and time in the development of techniques, materials and procedures, laboratory, clinical, surgical, in short, in all areas of dental practice. And recently, driven by the emerging need generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

So the dentist, usually the youngest, is "liquid". Liquid is fluid, without consistency, one of the three states of matter, intermediate between the solid and gaseous states. But perhaps this thought is too late and outdated. The dentist is no longer liquid, but airy, vague and without consistency. Aerial, in a figurative sense, is vain, futile, without foundation.

Exhaustive studies no longer support the need for knowledge in order to better deal with the demands of the patient, the case, possible misfortunes during treatment, side effects, adverse reactions and complications. Decision-making is no longer reasoned on Dentistry based on scientific evidence, but on what favours "my pocket" (the young dentist's).

Treatments without scientific support, without qualified evidence, bordering on quackery, are offered and carried out, and sometimes at a high price!

Based on this sad and current reality, possible legal actions (civil, consumer, criminal, ethical and administrative) against the dental surgeon should be considered. The judicialisation of Dentistry in various countries is growing dramatically. The dental surgeon, whether new or experienced, must be attentive, aware and diligent in their behaviour.

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