

# Modernizing hygiene

## A growth strategy hiding in plain sight

Erin Kriener, RDH

Across the country, dentists are seeing a shift in both the types of patients walking through their doors and the complexity of conditions they present with. More adults are presenting with dental implants, complex medical histories, and higher levels of oral inflammation linked to systemic conditions. At the same time, hygiene departments are under increasing pressure to deliver exceptional clinical outcomes while maintaining efficiency and patient comfort.

As codirector of Hygiene Mastery, I have the opportunity to work with dental practices across the country, and I often observe that the difference between teams that struggle and those that thrive comes down to alignment and a shared mindset of constant and never-ending improvement (CANI). When dentists and hygienists are calibrated around evidence-based approaches to disease prevention and biofilm management, the hygiene department becomes more than a preventive service; it becomes a powerful driver of both patient health and practice growth.

### Hygiene inconsistency is costing you

One of the most common challenges I observe with dental teams is variability in how oral disease and biofilm are managed. While dentists and hygienists share the same goal, differences in training, comfort levels, and available technology can lead to inconsistent approaches to disease management, implant

maintenance, and patient comfort. Nearly 47% of adults aged 30 and older in the US have some form of periodontal disease, and 3 million Americans currently have dental implants, with that number growing by 500,000 annually.<sup>1,2</sup>

### Air polishing and the shift to predictable care

As dental teams work to improve consistency in biofilm management, practices are turning to technologies that support predictable and patient-centered care. Air polishing has emerged as a significant advancement in modern preventive and periodontal therapy, helping clinicians disrupt the biofilm that contributes to oral-systemic disease. When used with soft, low-abrasive powders such as glycine, air polishing has been shown to effectively disrupt periodontal pathogens and biofilm while remaining gentle on implant surfaces and restorative materials.<sup>3</sup> Technologies such as HuFriedyGroup's PWR Air-Polishing system are helping hygiene teams elevate the standard of care by supporting thorough biofilm removal while maintaining a comfortable patient experience.

One of the first benefits of implementing air-polishing technology is improved efficiency. By allowing clinicians to disrupt and remove biofilm more efficiently and comfortably, hygiene teams are able to spend less time on traditional polishing while also improving their effectiveness. This shift allows clinicians to devote more time to

patient education, disease management, and identifying treatment needs. When hygienists have both the time and tools to address disease earlier in the appointment, patients benefit from more comprehensive care, and practices benefit from improved workflow and greater opportunities for same-day treatment.

### Turning hygiene into a production driver

As dentistry continues to evolve, practices that embrace a mindset of constant and never-ending improvement (CANI) are best positioned to adapt to the changing needs of their patients. Supporting hygienists with evidence-based protocols and modern technologies allows teams to manage oral disease more effectively while delivering a more comfortable, efficient, and elevated patient experience. When dentists and hygienists are aligned around these goals, the hygiene department becomes more than a preventive service or a cost center. It becomes a critical driver of patient health, practice growth, and long-term clinical success. **DE**

### REFERENCES

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**ERIN KRIENER, RDH, CODIRECTOR OF HYGIENE MASTERY**, is a clinician, speaker, educator, and coach. With decades of experience, she helps hygienists and dental teams improve performance and patient outcomes. She is laser certified and has advanced training in periodontal therapy from the Kois Dental Research Center in Seattle, Washington.