

THE *Secrets*
to Practice Growth
& Professional Fulfillment:



How Comprehensive
Cosmetic Dentistry Leads the Way

INTRODUCTION

Economic changes in the last decade have affected the dental industry, dental practice, and how patients choose to allocate their financial resources for dental procedures they both need and want. According to the American Dental Association, factors contributing to recent overall flattening in dental care spending include annual dental expenditure decreases, fewer patients with dental insurance, and reduced dental insurance coverage.¹

The steady income and productivity streams representative of by-gone generations—regular checkups and cleanings, routine x-rays, amalgam fillings at the first hint of decay, and crowns when teeth just looked too worn—aren't so predictable anymore. Nor do they provide the satisfaction and fulfillment that drive and motivate today's professionals.

Whereas practices once did well by simply advertising needs-based services, it's a different story today. With increased competition between practices, dentists and their teams are challenged to accomplish more with less, altering and innovating their practice models to reshape how they attract, convert, and retain patients, as well as how they present and execute routine care, and necessary and elective treatments. Today, marketing, patient education, level of service and care, and skillset differentiate one dentist from another.

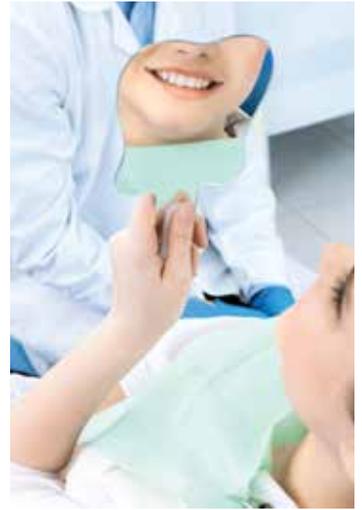
As overwhelming and intimidating as these changes may seem, they bode well for dental professionals who recognize the need to adapt to the times. That's because while observers may cite recent trends as indications that dental practice and professional growth is stagnating, one area continuing to flourish and exhibit significant growth in

recent years is comprehensive cosmetic and restorative dentistry. This may perhaps explain—or be explained—by the fact that more than half of the economic value in today's dental care comes from treatments and procedures that were unavailable 20 or more years ago.² Scientific research and developments leading to the introduction of new technologies and materials, and the lens of best practices to refine their respective uses, have transitioned dentistry from isolated tooth repair to more comprehensive oral care.

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If consumer demand continues to dictate what dentists do, how they do it, and what they use when doing it, growth in cosmetic dentistry will only continue. Patients are more knowledgeable about dental treatments and what's involved, and they're equally cognizant of what “cosmetic” or elective treatments can do for the appearance of their teeth and smile. Even if their treatment is necessary—rather than elective—they expect it to be esthetic and natural looking, functional, and they want thinner and more conservative restorations.³

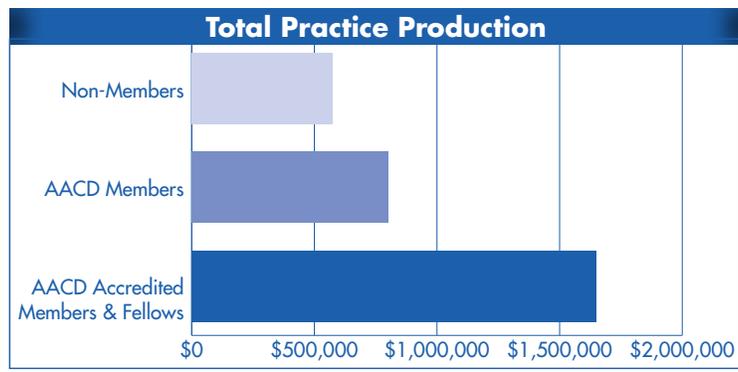
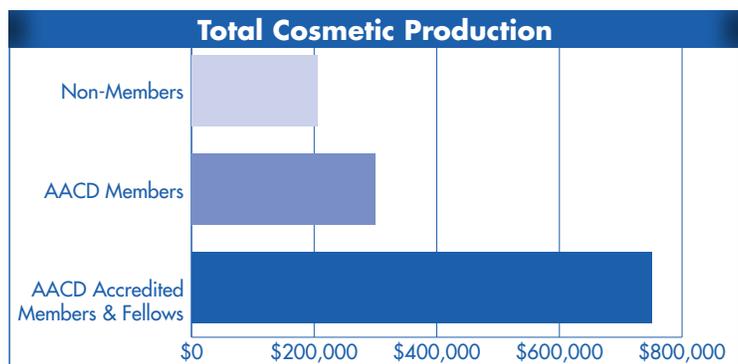
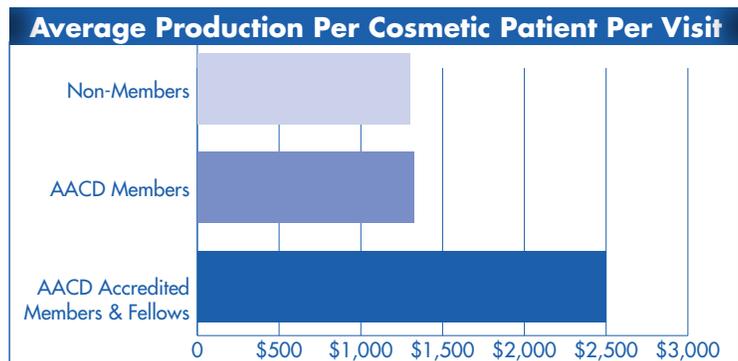
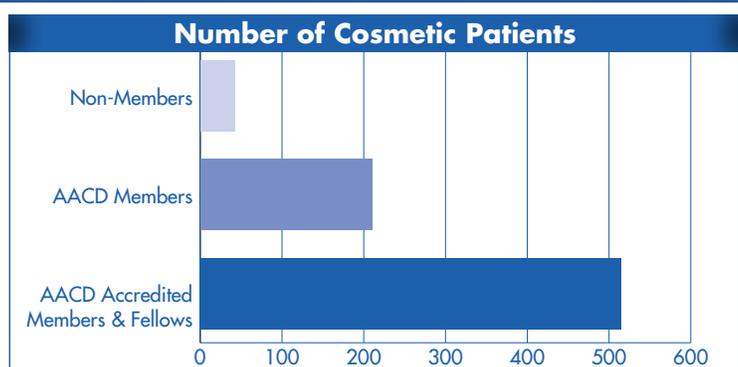
Clearly, the pathway for dental professionals to realize and maximize the full potential of this shift for themselves and their patients necessitates navigating a course toward practicing recognized standards for excellence, not merely incorporating the use of tooth-colored materials and restoratives for a cosmetic “look.” Fortunately, this is well-charted terrain. It's a road that dentists and laboratory technicians have successfully embarked upon for 30 years through membership, educational programming, skills development, collegial connections, and Accreditation in the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD).



AACD MEMBERS REPORT HIGHER EARNINGS

The American Dental Association recently reported* dentists' earnings are not rebounding despite several years of economic recovery, according to new ADA research. Recent years have seen a stagnation of dental spending, an increased number of dentists and, as a result, stagnant dentist earnings, the study found.

However, data suggests that AACD Members, and particularly AACD Accredited Members, typically see more revenues and greater practice production from performing higher-margin comprehensive cosmetic, functional, and restorative treatments. *December 16, 2014



Data from a representative sampling of respondents from the AACD 2013 Cosmetic Dentistry State of the Industry Survey.

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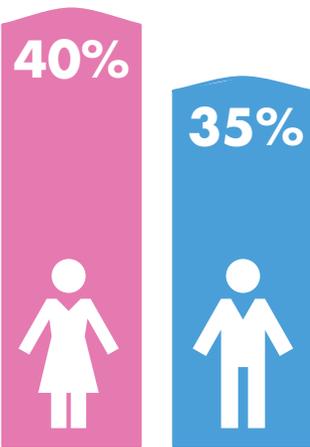
THE COMPREHENSIVE COSMETIC DENTISTRY DIFFERENCE

Professional and patient desires have driven manufacturers to create a greater variety of tooth-colored ceramic and composite materials to improve esthetics, allowing everyone who uses them to claim they provide “cosmetic dentistry.” However, comprehensive cosmetic dentistry remains a multifaceted discipline that, while certainly requiring advanced materials, involves judicious treatment planning and well-developed techniques. While one day all dentistry may be “cosmetic” and metal-free, it is comprehensiveness of the esthetic and clinical examination, subsequent treatment plan, and ultimate outcome that define the quality and value of cosmetic dentistry.

Considering patients are willing to make a financial investment to ensure they receive a highly esthetic and long-lasting dental treatment, understanding the importance of advanced training and education in comprehensive cosmetic dentistry is significant. According to an independent study conducted by the AACD,⁴ the overwhelming majority of adults (80 percent) admitted they would spend money to hide or correct aging flaws, and more than three in five said they would spend money to maintain the quality of their teeth—far more than would address weight (48 percent), thinning hair (33 percent), or dark circles under their eyes (33 percent).

Why? Perhaps because nearly half of American adults who participated in a separate survey (48 percent) identified the smile as the most memorable feature after meeting someone, even more memorable than the first thing a person says (25 percent).⁵ The absence of a healthy and

beautiful smile can have an emotional and negative impact on patients, with some respondents viewing people with



crooked or stained teeth as less attractive (37 percent) and less confident (25 percent) than those with perfect teeth. **In fact, more women than men (40 percent vs. 35 percent) feel that an imperfect smile makes someone less appealing.**

In an otherwise sluggish economy, cosmetic dentistry can make the difference between

attaining practice profitability/professional fulfillment and simply maintaining the status quo. According to Dr. Roger Levin, CEO and founder of The Levin Group, the market for cosmetic dental services remains strong and stable because patient desire to improve their appearance has not diminished.⁶ This supports previous data compiled by the AACD in 2011, which indicated that revenues generated by cosmetic dental procedures would remain stable, if not increase. Data from a 2013 State of the Industry survey demonstrates that, in fact, it did increase!

In the 2013 survey, more than one-third of respondents (36%) said that the average practice production per scheduled cosmetic dentistry patient visit was \$2,500 or more, the highest category in the survey. This represents an 11 point jump in only two years. What's more, 48% of respondents combined said the average cosmetic dentistry patient spent between \$2,500 to \$20,000+ in the past year, up 3 points in two years. Of all dental procedures (cosmetic and non-cosmetic), 13% of respondents reported revenues of more than \$2 million, a 5-point increase since 2011, while the number indicating the lowest category on the survey (less than \$500,000) shrunk by 5 percentage points, indicating positive news compared to two years ago.

CAVEATS OF COSMETIC DENTAL CARE

Although patients now request proven esthetic restorative dentistry to achieve an enhanced smile, many are unaware that truly comprehensive cosmetic treatments often involve more than simply placing better looking crowns or veneers.

Instead, the gold standard often incorporates treatment of structural, functional, mechanical, biological, and soft tissue problems that affect the overall condition of a patient's smile esthetics and oral health. And therein lies the fundamental difference between simply placing cosmetic restorations and providing comprehensive cosmetic care. Yet, many dentists may also be unfamiliar with this holistic approach to evaluating a patient's esthetic problems, largely because it isn't addressed thoroughly in dental schools. Without advanced education and skills development, dentists may be liable for the outcomes of the "cosmetic" treatments they provide.⁷



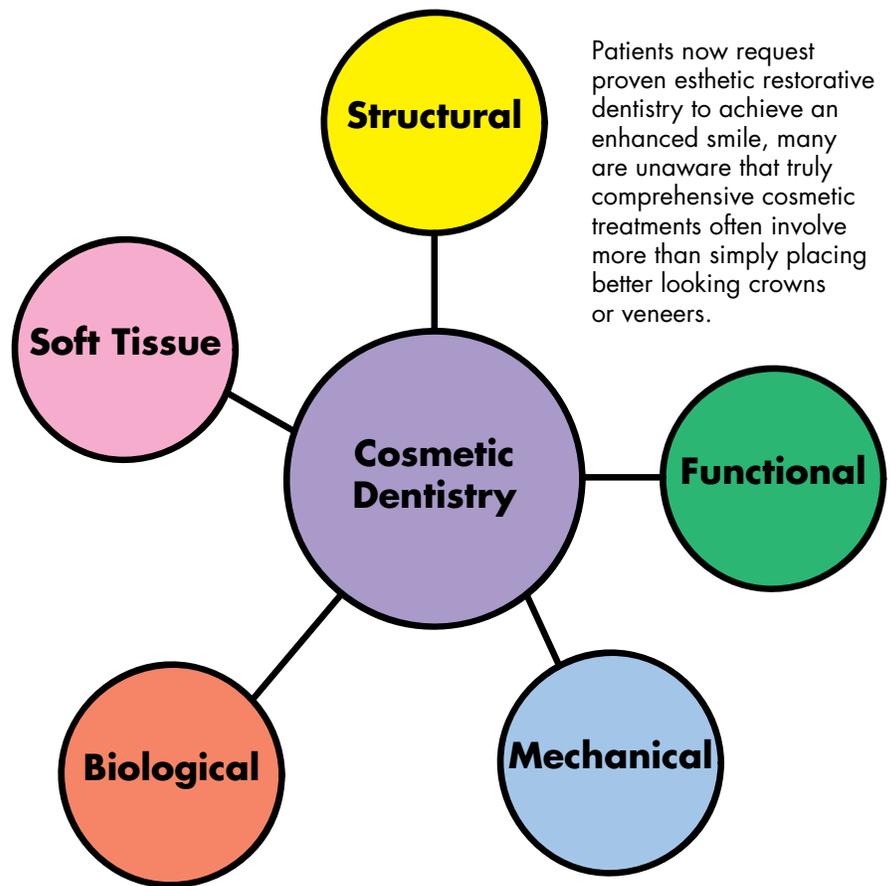
“Exposure to the breadth of potential cosmetic scenarios—and the application of proven techniques, materials, and collaborative approaches for their treatment—empowers dentists with experiential knowledge to address the uniqueness of their own patient cases and achieve the personal fulfillment and profitability that cosmetic dentistry can deliver. Active membership and participation in the AACD makes all of this possible.”

However, dentists who are engaged in the AACD—and especially those who pursue AACD Accreditation—immerse themselves in the diversity and complexity of even the most seemingly straightforward cases, such as a single anterior tooth requiring a composite restoration or multiple teeth requiring orthodontics, gingival sculpting, and indirect veneers. Although a 2013 survey completed by the AACD found that crowns and bridgework, bonding, veneers, and whitening continue to be top procedures offered by cosmetic dentistry,⁴ dental implants, orthodontics, fillings, and additional restorations are often required in the same case, necessitating treatment coordination with specialists and advanced training.

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AACD EDUCATION & ACCREDITATION—IT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

AACD membership offers far more than the educational opportunities necessary to succeed in cosmetic dentistry. It is a collegial and inviting community for sharing expertise, developing skills, and applying accurate and relevant information to treatment and practice challenges. The unique sense of camaraderie, support, and encouragement from professional peers committed to excellence nurtures continual motivation and inspiration for undertaking new challenges, with mentors serving as sounding boards and resources for difficult cases.



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a greater sense of purpose, satisfaction, and reward in their professional lives.⁸ Mentorship also provides immense support and belonging in an otherwise individual profession. The AACD offers strategic approaches for learning from experts who have achieved Accredited and Accredited

Fellow status, all of whom are accessible to help guide member dentists on their journey to professional fulfillment.

Pursuing AACD Accreditation is one avenue for applying further education to challenging cosmetic cases and realizing such fulfillment. AACD Accreditation is a three-part process, consisting of a written examination, case submissions (delivering and extensively documenting a broad range of cosmetic treatment solutions for five patients), and an oral examination administered by the American Board of Cosmetic Dentistry. Each part must be completed in sequence. Dental professionals can proceed at a pace that works best for them as long as the process is completed five years after passing the written examination. Through interaction with like-minded colleagues and examiners, members showcase their skills by applying them to specific case types to achieve quality esthetic and functional results. By successfully completing the AACD Accreditation process, Accredited Members demonstrate a high level of clinical skill and commitment to cosmetic

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dentistry that differentiates them from other dentists in their area.

Among the venues available to AACD members for education and skills training is the Annual AACD Scientific Session, during which attendees have opportunities to connect with peers and experts from around the world who emphasize in their lectures and hands-on workshops both responsible esthetics and comprehensive cosmetic treatments. Periodic regional programs also provide an array of opportunities for education and collaboration with mentors. Other resources include exclusive access to the quarterly Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry, which highlights the latest technology, techniques, and materials for cosmetic treatments, all of which can be incorporated into practice and/or integrated into future comprehensive treatments.

SUMMARY

At a time when cosmetic dentistry continues to represent opportunities for personal and professional growth, the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry empowers intrinsically and extrinsically motivated dentists to achieve

clinical excellence and attain both beyond their expectations. Unlike mere networking opportunities or educational



resources, the AACD recognizes the journey its members are undertaking, and supports them by creating connections with thought

leaders committed to responsibly, proficiently, and appropriately providing cosmetic treatments. With its extensive network of renowned experts, breadth of resources, rich educational opportunities, and member benefits that will help make you more successful, the time to join the AACD is now.

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The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) has established a portfolio of professional member benefits and services designed to improve your ability to deliver high-quality esthetic outcomes for your current patients, and favorably differentiate you to prospective patients in search of cosmetic services. Members may access specialized continuing education and an unparalleled peer knowledge base to help propel your career.

AACD membership helps you deliver what your current and prospective patients are asking for: accurate treatment planning and application of the latest and most effective cosmetic treatments. We invite you to enroll today so that you have full access and privileges.

AACD is recognized as the most authoritative source of information on comprehensive cosmetic dentistry. Whether you pursue the highly acclaimed Accreditation path or simply learn from case studies published in the peer-reviewed member-only publication, AACD *Journal of Cosmetic Dentistry* and presented at the professional conferences, membership will make a valuable and rewarding difference in your practice.

While AACD credentials differentiate your practice among prospective patients, the Academy's Find-a-Dentist online directory, member profile pages, and aggressive consumer awareness campaigns help new patients easily find you.

AACD Membership will help you stay competitive and prosperous in today's ever-changing world of cosmetic dentistry.

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