Rubber dam

Placement with modifications

Sir, we totally agree with the recent article on the importance of rubber dam isolation.¹ We would like to draw attention to additional alternative approaches for rubber dam placement with a slight modification using pictorial illustrations for different challenging situations:

- When a dentist is unable to place the clamp due to altered tooth morphology or rotation, a clampless method can be used, where rubber dam can be secured with the aid of wedjet or rubber dam stabilising cord as shown in Figure 1, or a small triangular piece can be cut from the corner of the rubber dam sheet and snapped interdentally on the distal proximal surface of the most posterior tooth as shown in Figure 2
- Alternatively, where a clamp is slightly rocking on the tooth surface, flowable composite can be placed on the jaws of the clamp and cured without etching and bonding to improve its stabilisation as shown in Figure 3

Fig. 1 Placement of rubber dam (a) without clamp using wedjet (b) and liquid dam (c)

Fig. 2 Rubber dam isolation without clamp. Small triangle cut from the corner of rubber dam sheet (a, b) and triangular piece snapped interdentally for stabilisation of rubber dam sheet (c, d)

- When performing an endodontic procedure through the existing bridge or in cases where the tooth is badly broken at the level of the gingival margin, split dam technique can be used as shown in Figure 4. To improve the isolation further, liquid dam, which is a flowable, light cured material, can be placed between the margin of rubber dam and tooth to get a better seal. The added advantage of liquid dam is it stays soft and flexible hence it permits easy removal after completion of the procedure
- Practice of rubber dam placement while performing tooth preparation for a single crown or fixed bridge should also be taken into consideration, for instance, when preparing a supra-gingival finish line
- Additionally, positioning the rubber dam to cover the nose of the patient would also aid in reduction of virus transmission.² However, more recent evidence also suggests that use of rubber dam results in considerably higher amounts of aerosols on the dentist's head; this mandates the need for coverage of the operator's head with appropriate protective wear.³

S. Bhatia, S. Kohli, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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Fig. 3 To secure rocking clamp (a) on tooth surface, flowable composite (b) can be placed

Fig. 4 Split rubber dam technique on anterior bridge using clamp (a), liquid dam (b) and dental floss (c)

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Cosmetic dentistry

Shark teeth

Sir, we write as practising dentists in South East Asia with regard to two concerning trends in dental aesthetics. Firstly, further to the recent letter *TikTok teeth* concerning the rising trend of young adults filing the incisal edges of their anterior teeth using a nail file to obtain a more even smile,¹ we note another, more aggressive and harmful trend, called 'shark teeth' on TikTok. Here, young adults post images of their tooth stubs, dubbed shark teeth, followed by another shot where they have perfectly straight white teeth.

An obsession with veneers and crowns seems to have overtaken a portion of teenagers and young adults trying to achieve the perfect 'influencer smile'. Many youngsters use DIY tools, or visit a dentist, to get crown preps for the sake of a video alone. These are horrible twists to treatments offered to enhance the aesthetics of an individual and can be seriously damaging.

Secondly, some dentists have been offering services that place a small logo, painting or tattoo on crowns, veneers, bridges or implants. The designs range from gods and goddesses to flowers and bizarrely, even sports icons. When people want to get their teeth whitened it seems strange that some would want to stain their teeth this way. In a process that has been dubbed 'tattooth', the tooth is prepared, and an enamel overlay or crown with the artwork is fabricated. The restoration is then seated on the prepared natural tooth, and the result leaves the impression of ink etched into the tooth. If a patient requested a tattooth it would be wise to only consider it in the event that a crown or an overlay was clinically required, and one that would be suitable to incorporate artwork. Understandably these tattoos are not recommended by any dental regulatory body as there is no research related to their harmful effects.

A. Venugopal, Chennai, India; A. Marya, Cambodia; M. I. Karobari, Malaysia

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