

## Dentists' resilience in the face of the coronavirus.

### La resiliencia de los dentistas frente al coronavirus.

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Due to the prolonged radical measures that some governments have taken - such as social distancing- the sources of income of many dentists have been reduced, or have become nonexistent. Hence, dental care professionals are daunted by the current scenario, in which no patient is thinking of looking after his or her oral health during this pandemic.

On the other hand, dentists face another dilemma:

How can they safely proceed to avoid catching the novel coronavirus? Although the answer seems obvious - strictly following biosecurity rules- people are still getting infected and dying in their surroundings, which is a tense and stressful environment.

A key to facing all of these concerns is for dentists to go through a process of learning to build up resilience, the personal capacity to adapt positively to sudden unforeseen events and widespread challenges with endurance.<sup>1</sup>

It is completely rational for dentists to be worried about infection through interaction with a patient because of direct contact with saliva, which is the main source of contagion. However, this should not instill panic since dentists have materials and supplies at their disposal to prevent COVID-19, including N95, FFP2, or FFP3 particulate filter masks and gowns.

If current government-mandated conditions do not allow dentists to accept patients, it is essential to cultivate personal resilience, namely by taking advantage of the time spent in isolation. For instance, the period of social distancing presents a great opportunity to improve one's mental health by spending time with family, developing good eating habits, exercising, and avoiding consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, when using social media it is wise to evade watching tragic or biased news stories, which are often inaccurate and exaggerated. Instead, one can employ social media to exchange positive and encouraging messages between colleagues, friends, or family.

On the other hand, dentists can also demonstrate resilience by sharing their knowledge in maintaining a good health with their communities. Explaining how to properly wash one's hands and the importance of social distancing to halt the spread of the virus are proactive services that contribute to prevention.

Moreover, if you hold a public health position, you could make yourself available to assist in triage and prove that you are not only trained in oral health care, but also prepared for supporting general medicine.

Alternatively, in the case of having a private practice, it is paramount to attend to urgent dental cases only and, by doing so, play a part in reducing

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the influx of patients into the hospital emergency service.

In conclusion, it is crucial that dentists take care of their mental health by staying active at all times, making themselves feel useful, and by developing

personal resilience when facing these challenging times during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means reacting in a positive way by using their profession with optimism, while other health professionals contribute to developing a cure for this disease.

## REFERENCES.

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