

Did You Know?



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Female dentists demand a thorough knowledge base to enter Implantology

By Adela Laverick

A recent survey by Straumann provided some very interesting insight into the attitudes of women to implant dentistry.

About the Survey

The survey was sent out to a range of female dentists: from undergraduates, through to university professors working in the following countries: Russia, South Africa, Turkey, Iran, Poland, Croatia, Malta, Slovenia, Lebanon, Estonia, Lithuania, Greece. The aim of the survey was to tailor the 1st WIN Summit held recently in Malta to the particular demands of female dental professionals. In total, 170 people responded.

What Did We Learn

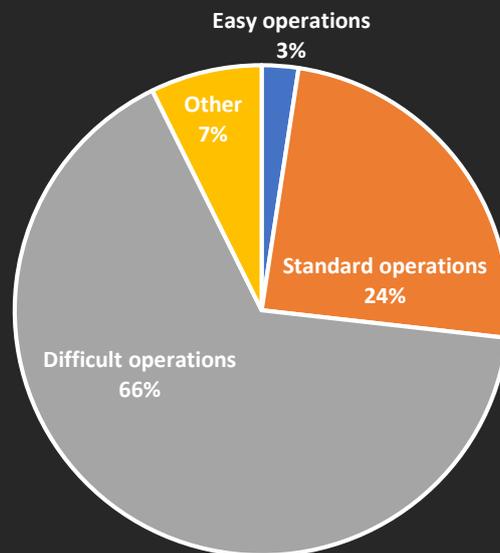
Within the respondent group, 84% are already involved in implant dentistry, with 74% already placing implants. Confirming this was a group already actively participating in implant dentistry.

When respondents were asked 'What would you need to learn in order to get involved in implant dentistry?' This question had the options of: 'easy, standard or difficult operations, or 'others'. 66% of the respondents chose 'difficult operations'.

This demonstrates a desire to have a thorough knowledge base and a good degree of competency before embarking on implant treatment.

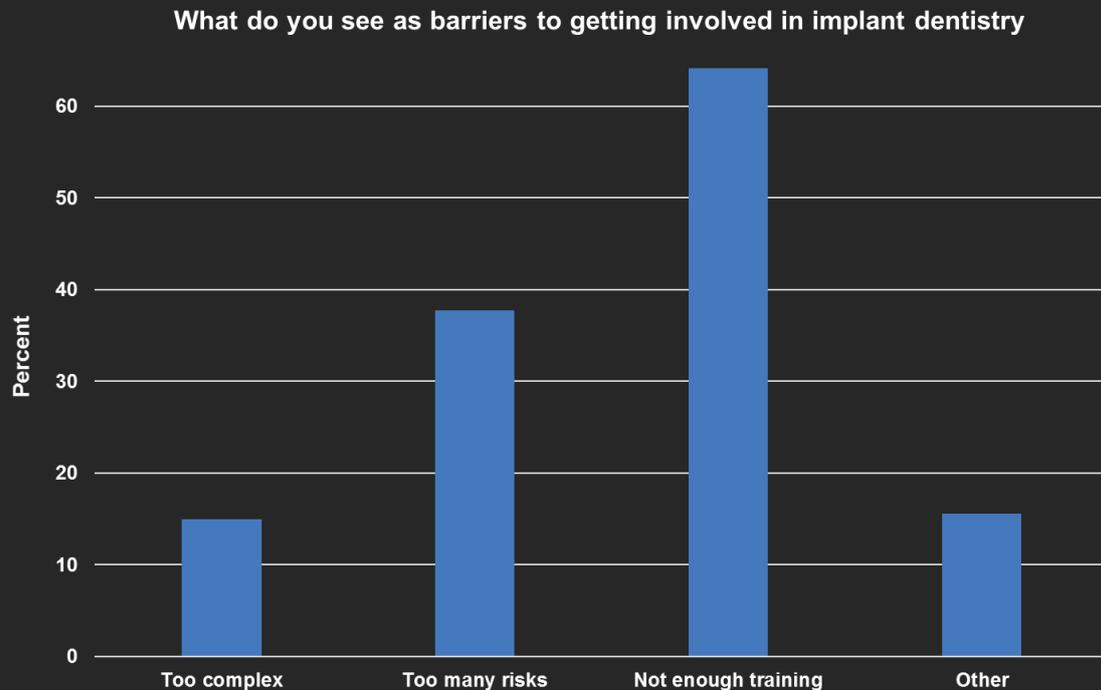
This is important because as with all surgery, unexpected complications can happen and it is important to be able to respond to changes in the surgical situation.

What would you need to learn in order to get involved in implantology?



When asked to give a specific written response to this question, the responses were quite varied. However, a recurring theme was a desire for comprehensive knowledge. Amongst this, many stated 'Prosthodontically driven knowledge' and similarly many stated 'good surgical principles' and 'the management of complications'.

The survey also asked: ‘What do you see as barriers (to) getting involved in implant dentistry’. 64% of respondents stated not enough training, and 38% too many risks. Again suggesting that within this group there seemed to be a desire for good education in the field.



When asked ‘what are your fears regarding dental implantology?’, the responses were very similar and focused on fear of surgical failure, irreversible complications and patient dissatisfaction.

Most interesting was the responses to the question: ‘What is your biggest challenge as a female professional in dentistry?’ Approximately 10% of the respondents felt that their biggest obstacle is balancing work and family responsibilities with one respondent answering:

“The biggest obstacle is to join 3 women ‘functions’ - dentist, mother and wife.”

The responses of 24% referred to some degree of gender inequality with comments such as :”the male professionals seem to monopolise implant dentistry’, and “people trust male dentists naturally”. Several made comments on the male dominance at professional conferences.

Conclusions

The responses of this small group of women suggest that knowledge is key for women to feel confident to progress within this exciting and fulfilling field of dentistry. The lack of adequate knowledge was the most recurring theme seen as an obstacle to developing a career in implant dentistry. Alongside this, some women find balancing work and home life a challenge.

In addition, a significant number (approximately 25%) had been aware of male dominance within the field of implantology, or of gender inequality. Without more detailed information, it is difficult to conclude whether this inequality is real, or merely perceived. Either way, it will be influencing female attitudes towards the speciality.

However, to finish I would like to share this comment:

“All women dentists can do all dental and implant surgery with enough training”.

My sentiments entirely: Good and appropriate education appears to be the key.