Mini Implants: An Interview with Dr. Gordon Christensen

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald Jensen
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Dr. Gordon Christensen is a leading proponent of minimally invasive dentistry. He is a recipient of the prestigious Hall of Fame Award from the Academy of Restorative Innovations. His lectures are one of the most sought-after presentations at dental meetings. He is a prolific author and a popular speaker around the world.

Dr. Gordon Christensen: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here with you and your readers for this interview. There are so many questions that people have about mini implants, so I'm looking forward to sharing some of my perspectives.

Q: *To start things off, how many years have you been placing small diameter implants? Do you remember the very first one?*

GC: Probably the best answer to that question is going back to our CRDT/Implant Research Group at the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry, which was published in November 2007. At that time, I had placed about 1,000 implants. I'm not sure if I only about those that were placed in about 200 people in that report which ended with a cut-off date of about 2 years. We had a very particular group of patients that we were participating in. We were participating in a multicenter study of the Nobel Biocare NobelDirect implant. We had a number of dental schools, with a mean of 21. They were all in the Southeastern United States, and we were placing these implants in edentulous proclinations, 4 percent were maxillary anterior and 96 percent were posteriorly. The patients had been dentures on average of 22 years. Approximately 50 percent of the patients had been edentulous for 10 years. We performed either surgery or prosthetics on 1,000 in this 2-year study. Because of the novel, most of them had been in other studies, and they had been in other implant studies, we had a lot of implants seating 20 years old.

Q: *And what your practice, what percentage of your patients are edentulous? Do you still have edentulous patients?*

GC: I've been doing surgery and placing implants since 1969. Back in those early courses, would have different percentages, but now, I'm a prosthodontist, so I don't do surgery anymore. I'm placing implants in doing a small diameter implants versus conventional implants.

Q: *For the sake of some of our readers who are not familiar with mini implants, can you tell us, which, what would you say are the specifications of a mini implant?*

GC: The primary benefit of mini implants is that they are small diameter implants. Conventional implants are 3.75 millimeters, conventional implant placement, the person who is doing the surgery, the person who is doing the implant, the person who will restore, or the person who will do the prosthetic, they have a choice.

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Q: *What would you say the primary benefit of mini implants versus conventional implants?*

GC: Simplicity. Going back to that NobelDirect 2007 multicenter report, when asked about difficulty of implant placement, surgeons, dental students, dental students, they had placed implants with a flap or "slightly more than a flap." They had placed, I'm sorry, they had advantage to the flap. We had a program at the World Congress of Implants, and we had a panel of people who had placed implants in edentulous patients with technique. And this was one of the major questions that people had.

Another significant advantage is that they are easier to place. We had a lot of people who had placed implants. Some of the questions I've looked hundreds of them, thousands of them.

Q: *Initially, mini implants were primarily used for edentulous patients and retention regimens. What would you say now, regarding the use of mini implants versus conventional implants?*

GC: Initially, I was using them on edentulous patients and I had placed conventional implants and just wanted to see what would happen if I placed a mini implant in edentulous patients. Conventional implants integrated. I thought, what would happen if I placed a mini implant? And they integrated. I was surprised by that. I thought that I called could hide the mini implants. I'm sorry, I'm, I'm, I'm