**Laser Dentistry**

Uncovering the Tooth: The Diode Laser to Uncover Teeth, Brackets and Implants.

**Introduction:**

In this month’s edition of Dentistry Today, I look at the role of the diode laser in helping with removing tissue that covers three separate areas: natural teeth, orthodontic brackets and dental implants. Soft tissue can act as a barrier in many cases during regular dental treatment and the diode laser can be used to routinely remove tissue safely and efficiently around dental hard tissue (tooth structure and bone) as well as around metals (brackets, implants, amalgam, gold etc.). Although monopolar electrosurge units can be used around dental hard tissues, they cannot be safely used around metals as they can cause catastrophic iatrogenic damage (1-3), so the diode laser can be a tremendous alternative in those situations.

**Uncovering Teeth**

The diode laser can be used to uncover teeth in many situations where tissue is acting as a barrier to successful completion of restorations. The simple laser gingivectomy, which is the most common procedure a laser dentist encounters (4) can be completed at low settings of around 0.7 - 1.1 watts continuous wave (CW) with an initiated tip. (5-7) (Fig1-3)

**Uncovering Tissue for Dental Implants**

Soft tissue management around dental implants can be a problem that is difficult to solve with traditional means such as electrosurge, or surgical blades. Many monopolar electrosurge units can act as a barrier to successful completion of the implant after a matter of seconds (1-2)

In a two stage technique where an implant is placed surgically and covered with soft tissue in the initial stage, the implant must be uncovered at the 2nd stage. If the implant is crestal or slightly supra crestal, and there is adequate soft tissue existing, the diode laser can be used to safely remove overlying soft tissue. (16-18) (Figs. 7-9).

In conclusion, the diode laser can be an invaluable tool to remove tissue in many situations such as around teeth, orthodontic appliances and dental implants. The ability to work in a bloodless field, quickly and efficiently without fear of interaction with metallic or dental structures makes the diode laser an indispensable tool for the restorative dentists armamentarium.

**References**