

Council on Communications, Winter 1990

by Dr. Barton H. Tayer

The 1989 national patient census report, performed by the AAO, has tied in rather interestingly with the research report, performed by the Gallup Organization, to study the effectiveness of our current public relations/advertising program. The census presented many interesting facts, some of which I would like to emphasize.

First, the good news:

- The share of patients coming to orthodontists from dental referrals is up from 57.6% in 1986, to 60.1% in 1989.
- The average number of new patient exams has increased from 239 in 1986, to 261 in 1989.
- The average number of new patient starts has increased from 154 in 1986, to 164 in 1989.
- Approximately 70% of adult patients are female.
- The share of new practices (1-5 years) has increased relative to established practices (average 16 years).

Now, the bad news:

- In all of the above categories, except for the increase in referrals sent to us by our dental colleagues and the large percentage of our adult females under treatment, the Northeastern constituent showed statistically insignificant increases. There were, however, no decreases.

As a part of the Communication Council's program, the Gallup Organization was commissioned by the AAO to perform a benchmark study on women across this nation, age 25-44, to determine their knowledge of, and attitudes about, orthodontics. Additionally, they did a "reader response" survey to determine the effectiveness of our recent magazine advertising campaign by discovering the respondents' follow-through with appointments to visit an orthodontist. Any one of you interested in the possibility of obtaining the full text of these reports should contact me at 1842 Beacon St., Brookline, MA 02146.

The benchmark study surveyed 221 females, age 25-44, with household incomes of \$25,000 or more, to determine their opinions about braces. The major findings included the following:

- The family dentist continues to be the most important individual in the referral process.
- The great majority of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the appearance of their teeth and smile.
- 87% were familiar with what orthodontists did, and felt that they were the most qualified to straighten a person's teeth. Respondents indicated, however, that a more accurate and honest opinion about their orthodontic needs would come from their family dentist.

The "reader response" survey was completed after interviewing 202 people who had requested information after reading the magazine advertisement. Among other things, the results concluded that:

- 66% of those who had submitted a photo for computer-imaging eventually set up an appointment with

an orthodontist.

- 83% of those interviewed, who had made an appointment with an orthodontist, did so after having read the ad.
- The incidence of dentist referral was 52-57%.
- The strongest reason respondents requested more information was because of the computer-imaging offer.
- The inability to afford treatment was the main reason why respondents chose not to receive treatment after it was recommended.

The entire PR/advertising program, with its three-pronged thrust — emphasizing "teamwork" with our professional colleagues, geared towards young female adults, and using computer-imaging as an attention-getting device — appears to have been correct.

Announcement

Dr. Alexander M. Samuels, of Bayside, New York, has been appointed to the Executive Committee of the Dental Society of the State of New York. Dr. Samuels is a past president of the NESO.

1990 Research Grant Winners

Congratulations to the following persons who were selected as winners of NESO research grants in 1990:

Dr. Gregory A. Hack, University of Connecticut, "Stability and Prediction of Soft Tissue Changes Following LeFort I Surgery — A Five-Year Follow-Up Study"

Dr. Jeffrey Burzin, University of Connecticut, "The Stability of Incisor Intrusion"

Dr. James J. Tenbrook, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, "Effect of Hyperpropulsion on Mandibular Tissues in Rats"

Dr. Niki Hatzioannou, New York University, "Pattern of Maxillary Expansion Achieved by a Variety of Expanders Acting on Maxillary Acrylic Models With Unilateral Cleft"

Dr. Justin K. Bass, Montefiore Medical Center, "Nickel Hypersensitivity in the Orthodontic Population"

Dr. Nancy L. Villa, Montefiore Medical Center, "Changes in the Maxilla Secondary to Palatal Crib Therapy"

Dr. James S. Prawat, Montefiore Medical Center, "A Comparison Between Radiographic and Sonically-Produced Cephalometric Values"

Dr. Michael J. Reilly, Montefiore Medical Center, "Comparative Study Between Planar and Spect Nuclear Bone Imaging in Patients With Facial Asymmetries"