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MedMark, llc

PUBLISHER | Lisa Moler
 Email: lmoler@medmarkaz.com

MANAGING EDITOR | Mali Schantz-Feld
 Email: mali@medmarkaz.com | Tel: (727) 515-5118

ASSISTANT EDITOR | Elizabeth Romanek
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EDITORIAL ASSISTANT | Mandi Ross
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FRONT OFFICE MANAGER | Theresa Jones
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MedMark, LLC
 15720 N. Greenway-Hayden Loop #9
 Scottsdale, AZ 85260
 Tel: (480) 621-8955 Fax: (480) 629-4002
 Toll-free: (866) 579-9496 Web: www.implantpracticeus.com

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New abutment benefits both patient and practitioner

E dentulous patients frequently complain about the lack of denture retention, stability, and support. In fact, 50% of denture wearers have problems with retention and stability. The lack of denture retention is mostly noted with the mandibular denture and is accompanied by poor function, speech, neuromuscular control, and continued bone resorption. Studies found that denture stability in both arches was determined to be the criteria that most significantly affected the patient's quality of life. On the other hand, a stable mandibular denture was the most significant factor in determining patient satisfaction.

Implant overdentures generally offer the advantages of improved comfort, support, retention, and stability. Retaining and supporting the mandibular denture by using endosseous implants yield improvements in comfort and stability, affording the patients not only effective oral rehabilitation but also greater self-confidence. In addition, treating complete denture wearers with implants to support their dentures improves their chewing efficiency, increases maximum bite force, and clearly improves satisfaction.

A key diagnostic decision relates to the number of implants that will be used. This decision is determined by the patient's expectations, complaints, desires, and financial commitment. The number of implants determines the degree of denture stability, the choices of attachments, and the design of the overdenture.

An abundance of abutments have been introduced to retain implant-supported overdentures. Resilient attachments like the LOCATOR® that permit movement about all axes have been proven through the years to be efficient and reliable. The LOCATOR® has grown to be the market leader for implant-supported overdentures.



Dr. Nadim Z. Baba

New abutment

The success of the traditional LOCATOR® and Zest Anchors' quest for innovation and excellence led to the introduction of an improved LOCATOR® abutment, the new LOCATOR® R-Tx Removable Attachment System. LOCATOR® R-Tx can correct divergence up to 30° per implant and 60° between implants without any need for pre-angled abutments. The abutment is coated with titanium carbon nitride (TiCN), which renders the abutment harder, with greater wear resistance and esthetics (pink in color). In addition, the TiCN coating reduces the roughness of the abutment by 64%, potentially minimizing plaque accumulation. The LOCATOR® R-Tx can be inserted onto the implant with a conventional .050" (1.25 mm) Hex driver and has been designed with dual retention on the external surface of the abutment with one set of retention inserts designed to resist edge deformation and provide easy denture insertion alignment. The retention inserts are available in four force levels: zero, low, medium, and high. The denture attachment housing has been anodized pink for improved esthetics under the overdenture where acrylic is thin. In addition, vertical grooves and anti-rotation (flat) features have been designed into the housing to enhance fixation.

My clinical experience with LOCATOR® R-Tx shows that the abutment is superior to the traditional LOCATOR®. It allows for more divergence between implants, and the majority of the patients preferred it to the traditional LOCATOR®. This new abutment offers an excellent service both to the patients and their treating dentist. Kudos to Zest Anchors!

Nadim Z. Baba, DMD, MSD, FACP, received his dental degree from the University of Montreal in 1996. He completed a Certificate in Advanced Graduate Studies in Prosthodontics and a Master's degree in Restorative Sciences in Prosthodontics from Boston University School of Dentistry in 1999. Dr. Baba currently serves as a Professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry and the Director of the Hugh Love Center for Research and Education in Technology at Loma Linda University School of Dentistry. He is an active member of various professional organizations, a Diplomate of the American Board of Prosthodontics, and a Fellow of the American College of Prosthodontists and the Academy of Prosthodontics. Dr. Baba has received several honors and awards during his career, including the David J. Baraban Award from Boston University, the Claude R. Baker Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching Predoctoral Fixed Prosthodontics in 2009 from the AAFP, and the California Dental Association's Arthur A. Dugoni Faculty Award in 2010. He is also the Associate Editor for the Aesthetics/Prosthetics/Restorative section in the *Journal of Dental Traumatology* and a reviewer for the *Journal of Prosthodontics* and the *Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry*. He is the author of numerous publications, has recently published a book entitled *Restoration of Endodontically Treated Teeth: Evidence-Based Diagnosis and Treatment Planning*, and has lectured nationally and internationally.

Disclosure: