

Pride & Prejudice

Napoleon Bonaparte, once emperor of France, commented on the subject of medicine in this way: “Medicine is not an exact and positive science but a science based on conjectures and observations. I would have more confidence in a physician who has not studied the natural sciences than in one who has.”

We should consider his words as we face the remarkable development of the field of periodontology and implantology over the past decades. We have witnessed several astonishing clinical successes based on the never-ending questions and endeavors of numerous scientists.

Due to their research excellence, we are able to provide a favorable quality of life to our contemporaries by conserving periodontal health and curing the edentulous state with appropriate scientific knowledge. We deserve to be proud of our profession.

However, let us pause for a moment. Are we really justified in this celebratory mood?

Although modern periodontology has evolved from the study of repair into the subject of regeneration, we are still a long way from our fundamental goal, which is the identification of the genuine causes and true mechanisms of periodontal disease.

The situation is more complicated with regard to dental implantology. The present dental personnel and patients are very much accustomed to this treatment modality introduced by Dr. Brånemark. There is a consensus that

implants are a reliable means for substituting for missing teeth from both functional and esthetic points of view. However, careful attention must be paid to the status quo. While implant therapy is more and more prevalent in clinics, the risk of peri-implantitis outbreaks is also growing greater and greater. To make things worse, we are not yet endowed with an effective remedy.

If we would overlook these problems and be content with our present position, then our passion for scientific truth is crippled in the name of pride. Consequently, this could lead to prejudice—an assumption that one therapy is better than another without scientific evidence.

In order to turn over a new leaf, the language of Dr. Claude Bernard, a French physiologist of the 19th century, is efficacious. He remarks, “To conserve health and to cure disease: Medicine is still pursuing a scientific solution of this problem, which has confronted it from the first.”

Hence, we dubbed both of these fields, periodontology and implantology, as periodontal and implant science with sincerity. This issue of JPIS contains five research articles and three case reports. We do hope you enjoy these papers for the sake of periodontal and implant science.

Tae-Il Kim

Editor

Department of Periodontology, Seoul National University School of Dentistry,
Yeongeon-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-749, Korea

E-mail: periopf@snu.ac.kr, Tel: +82-2-2072-2642, Fax: +82-2-744-1349