There’s no dentistry like no dentistry

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The title sounds arrogant coming from a dentist. What if it came from one of the premier dental schools in the United States or from two of the most noted caries researchers, University of Pennsylvania’s Dr Doug Young or Dr Kim Kutsch? That’s the message from the World Congress of Minimally Invasive Dentistry (WCMID), and it doesn’t mean there’s no reason for dentists to be around. It means there’s just nothing like an intact tooth, and everything we do to repair it comes in at a distant second place.

For clinicians to understand the true meaning of the phrase, they have to really own a few things—such as germs are small, so small that a margin is not a margin, it’s a canyon. Finding out why enamel breakdown is occurring must come first; the time of watching and waiting before taking action is over.

Dentistry (WCMID), and it is endorsed by the World Dental Federation, the FDI and the American Dental Association. It is a message from the World Congress of Minimally Invasive Dentistry. The WCMID is a meeting that clinicians can attend to learn about the latest developments in minimally invasive dentistry.

No longer.

At the WCMID meeting last summer, a new paradigm was offered. Dental decay is not a bacterial disease, it is a pH disease. Bacteria will not survive in an alkali environment, so it’s no wonder they’re only found in mouths with low pH—the chicken/egg dilemma. The chemical reaction that occurs in a low pH can be altered by forcing the pH upward. Recaldent does this by releasing amorphous calcium and phosphates during an acid challenge.

Xylitol can increase pH when used as a sweetening agent in gum and candies, and over and above the pH increase of chewing paraffin, as shown in a group session of a hands-on workshop. This does not include the damaging effects of xylitol on biofilm construction, cell walls and strep metabolism.

The science of Novamin also makes it easier to digest the idea that any prosthesis is inferior to the natural tooth. It means there’s just nothing for dentists to be around. And it doesn’t mean there’s no reason to believe there’s more to oral care than the 45 degrees on the toothbrush, the C of the floss and more fluoride?

Call a cavity a hole, call a filling a prosthesis and call on all of your education to help those who can be taught and take the burden off those who cannot.

Editorial note: A list of references is available from the publisher.