Glasgow Scientists Go 3-D

A new technique will allow three-dimensional pictures of teeth to be made while patients wait. The images would help dentists detect signs of tooth decay before the damage gets out of hand. Lead scientist Simon Poland from the Institute of Photonics at the University of Strathclyde worked with colleagues at the University of Dundee and the Dental Hospital to forge a new application of an existing technology. Using structured light, which is a beam of light in a grid pattern, individual slices through a 3-D object are obtained and put together to form a complete 3-D picture. Poland’s team are the first to apply the method to human teeth and successfully produce a 3-D image of a tooth’s diseased area. Poland’s team is now doing research in order to develop a kit for dental practices that will be fast and simple to use. This would be a powerful diagnostic tool capable of informing dentists about the size, shape, and progression of tooth decay.

Dental Side Effects

The results of a study published in the September/October 2004 issue of General Dentistry suggests that treatments for mood disorders may cause adverse dental side effects. The clinical, peer reviewed journal is published by the Academy of General Dentistry. Medications used in treatment can cause xerostomia and a higher rate of dental caries and periodontal disease. It is estimated that approximately 14% of adults face mood disorders—depression or bipolar disorder are common—at some point during their lives. Early diagnosis and treatment can significantly reduce the risk of suicide from these disorders. Left untreated, major depression usually lasts eight or nine months. With treatment, patients usually begin to feel better and rid themselves of suicidal thoughts within one to three weeks. Approximately 60% of those who suffer from bipolar disorder notice improvements when psychotherapy and medication are used jointly for treatment.

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