Obtaining harmonious aesthetic results with two different veneering materials is a considerable challenge that is not without risks. Situations in which dental technicians are forced to use several different veneering materials to satisfy the needs of their customers are determined by biological factors and the financial means of the patients. All the ceramic veneering materials on the market differ in their chemical composition, which is responsible for the final appearance of the restoration. In addition, the influence of the framework material should not be underestimated. If it hinders the transmission of light, the aesthetics of the restoration will be compromised.

So, how do we obtain truly perfect results?

We tend to choose products that can be combined on the basis of their optical compatibility. For this purpose, we often have to rely on the many years of experience we have gained working with materials from different manufacturers. However, we have also found that we can achieve optical compatibility by using products manufactured by companies who supply materials that are coordinated in terms of their shade. Manufacturers who focus their efforts on solving the problem of optical compatibility amongst their different materials strive to offer their products in integrated systems.

On the basis of the following case, we would like to demonstrate the manner in which two different materials can be successfully combined. The patient’s teeth #14, 15, 16, 17, 26 and 27 were restored with provisional crowns. For the permanent restoration of these teeth, a combination of all-ceramics (IPS e.max, Ivoclar Vivadent) and PFM ceramics (IPS InLine, Ivoclar Vivadent) was chosen: metal frameworks veneered with the leucite-based feldspathic ceramic IPS InLine were combined with lithium-disilicate glass-ceramic frameworks veneered with the nano-fluorapatite glass-ceramic IPS e.max Ceram.

The patient chose this solution for financial reasons. In the fabrication of the restorations, the specifications of the shade diagram and the recommended layer thicknesses of the individual materials were observed. The latter aspect was of particular importance due to the different shrinkage characteristics of the two ceramics.

The individual IPS InLine and IPS e.max Ceram veneering materials (for example, Dentin, Incisal and Effect materials) not only have consistent designations, but also coordinated shades. Before the metal frameworks in the present case were veneered with IPS InLine, the substrate had to be completely covered with an opaquer layer to mask the metal. The IPS e.max lithium-disilicate frameworks did not require this coating, as the materials for the fabrication of the substructures are available in many different shades and levels of translucency.

Nonetheless, we were able to follow the same shade diagram once we had placed the layer that would mediate the required adhesive bond (after foundation and opaquer firing, respectively). This enabled us to obtain the desired harmonious appearance of the restorations. IPS InLine and IPS e.max Ceram differ slightly with regard to their translucency. However, this aspect is quite useful in the subsequent layering procedure. We attenuated and masked the opaqueness of the metal frameworks, while we enhanced the translucent properties of the lithium disilicate by applying the IPS e.max Ceram all-ceramic.
“Coordinated materials and shade systems make it easy to use different types of ceramics in one restoration”

Replacing missing teeth within the esthetic zone in an esthetically satisfactory fashion has been and still is a major challenge in dentistry. High esthetic expectations and the desire for an overall aesthetic result are distant goals that can only be achieved with the combination of ceramic and porcelain materials. The present case demonstrates that the combination of PFM ceramics and all-ceramics can produce excellent aesthetic results. Coordinated materials and shade systems make it easy to use different types of ceramics in one restoration procedure for the all-ceramic sub-structure.

The protocol that is presented will improve the esthetic diagnosis, the communication and the predictability of anterior ceramic restorations. The goal is to design a smile that fits the patient’s functional, biological and emotional needs. Modern techniques and materials can be useless if the final outcome does not live up to the patient’s esthetic expectations.

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