Ultradent enhances tooth whitening with Opalescence Go

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Opalescence Go from Ultradent is a tooth-whitening treatment option that according to the company is perfect for travel, top-ups and quick starts. It is also intended to complement other tooth-whitening and stain-removing procedures that have been performed in dental practice.

The hydrogen peroxide formula of Opalescence Go's whitening gel is available in concentrations of 10 per cent and 15 per cent and in three flavours. It is delivered in a novel tray that customises its form in the mouth owing to heat-activated polymers. Besides having the benefit of a more comfortable fit, this improved adaption is intended to ensure that the maximum amount of gel remains in contact with the teeth during whitening.

Optimal gel quantity allows easy clean-up after the procedure, the company said. In order to reduce dental caries and tooth sensitivity, the gel also contains potassium nitrate and fluoride.

According to Ultradent, Opalescence Go combines everything that is current in whitening with simple application, as the pre-filled trays can be conveniently used right out of the package. The company provides a wide range of patient literature, posters, whitening menus and images for helping dentists to market whitening treatments and services to their patients.

Being at the forefront of the development of safe and controlled tooth-whitening products, Ultradent claims to be recognised throughout the world as a trademark of quality and reliability in dentistry. In addition to tooth-whitening products, the company manufactures and distributes an extended portfolio of dental materials, instruments and equipment.

Decline of dental gold production continues

Predications by World Gold Council see less demand for precious metal restorations worldwide

LONDON, UK: The use of gold in dental applications declined further in 2015. According to provisional figures released by the World Gold Council in London in February, between 5 and 4 per cent less of the precious material was used in dentistry last year compared with 2012.

Globally, a total of 57.3 tons of gold was used by the profession in the last 12 months, with dentists in Japan and the US remaining the two top consumers. In a statement, the council said that the drop in sales is due to the high price of precious metals on the world market and the continuation of the long-term trend away from gold cast alloys to cheaper alternatives, like ceramics.

“This is not all clinical problems linked to all-ceramic and fibre-reinforced composites have been resolved, these materials are poised to become the material of choice for dental restorations worldwide. As more aesthetic and less expensive treatment options are gaining popularity, the use of gold in dentistry will continue to decrease,” Dr Jukka Pekka Matinlinna, Associate Professor of Dental Materials Science at the University of Hong Kong, commented the figures.

Fabrication of dental gold peaked in 2004, when more than 67 tons was used in dentistry worldwide. Since then, the material has seen a rapid decline, particularly in developed markets like the US. Figures from a Thomson Reuters report indicate that demand there almost halved in 2012 compared with what was produced in the country almost a decade ago.

Germany, still the third largest consumer of dental gold in 2005, only put slightly over 2 tons on the market in 2012, a fragment of the 12.9 tons the country was using ten years earlier.

Demand has also plummeted in South Korea and Italy, two of the other top five consumers of dental gold. With 19 tons a year, Japan currently remains the largest user owing to the subsidisation of kinpala 12, a popular gold-palladium dental alloy, by the Japanese government.

With the first records of its use dating back to AD 200, gold is one of the oldest materials used by man to fill decayed teeth. It is still popular among many dentists owing to its high durability and biocompatibility, which makes it suitable for patients allergic to other metal-based restorative materials, such as amalgam.

Poor aesthetics in gingival regions and anterior teeth restorations, however, have limited its range of applications.
Outpacing growth in our international business

An interview with Julie Tay, Vice-President Asia Pacific at Align Technology

Dental Tribune: Your company changed its distribution in the Asia Pacific region to a direct sales model last year. How has the transition turned out so far in terms of organisation and finances?

Julie Tay: In the past, Japan and China were our only direct sales markets in Asia. In May 2015, we successfully completed the transition of our four largest indirect country markets, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore, from our APAC distributor back to direct sales and management by Align. This geographical distribution of countries probably represents the best global growth opportunities for Align Technology over the next three to five years. The transition has been smooth and we have continued to see strong organic growth for Invisalign in the APAC region. From the results from the last quarter of 2015, you can see that the total sales volume in Asia grew over 50 per cent annually. We now have a strong leadership team managing the business in each country.

Dental Tribune: How is realising direct sales about full Invisalign average sales price (ASP), rather than the discounted ASP under the distribution agreement? This means that the roughly 5 per cent of worldwide revenue for which Asia Pacific accounts will become an even more meaningful contributor to top line growth.

Julie Tay: The technology did not renew the distribution agreement with its distributor in the Asia Pacific region last year. Dental Tribune spoke with Align Technology’s regional vice president of the Asia Pacific region, Julie Tay, in Singapore about the transition and the company’s prospects in the region for the years to come.

Other APAC markets, like South Korea and the Philippines, are still operating under a distribution model. What makes these markets currently not suitable for direct sales, and do you have any plans to change to direct sales there?

Align continues to assess different markets and to work closely with our partners to provide the best possible service to both patients and doctors.

Sales in Asia contributed only 2 to 2.5 per cent of Align’s worldwide revenue in 2012. Was this the main reason for the change to your sales structure in that region?

This region presents a huge opportunity for Align. We want to provide doctors and patients with more options for a beautiful smile. There are actually many doctors who wanted to offer Invisalign and are glad that we now have a direct presence in many APAC countries.

You reported strong growth in the Asia Pacific region in the last quarter of 2013. Is this solely as a result of the transition or were there other developments at play?

Our strong annual volume growth reflects continued progress and execution of our strategic growth drivers across Asia Pacific. As the region came together, the APAC leadership team deployed key strategies in specific markets. We also invested heavily in people, doctor training and patient programmes to develop the markets further.

You are doing particularly well in China and Japan. Are these the most important markets for Invisalign right now?

The APAC region in general has been the fastest-growing region for us but within Asia China and Japan are currently the most important markets for Invisalign. Both countries share similarities, but they are also very different. What we see are the most complex cases, such as Class II, Class III, extraction, open bite, etc. That might be where the similarities end.

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Despite a population of 120 million, there are relatively small number of orthodontic practitioners in Japan: only an estimated 3,000 to 4,000. Practitioners there tend to be conservative and want to see sufficient clinical results on Japanese patients, which because of the severity of the malocclusion can take up two to three years. All of these factors led to a slow start but, in the past two years, our business has grown well above our overall rate. We have been successful in building up clinical confidence through a pro-active marketing approach, which includes educating consumers about clear aligner therapy and the importance of having a beautiful smile.

In China, orthodontics is primarily performed in institutional settings. A rising middle-class is accumulating disposable income for these kinds of treatments and they appear to be more open to technology and modern approaches to the treatment of malocclusion. We believe that China is the one market worldwide that has the potential to be as large as the US over the next ten years in terms of orthodontic treatment.

Particularly in Asia, Western dental manufacturers have to face increased competition from local providers offering similar products at lower costs (e.g. dental implants). Is the situation in your market comparable?

We believe we have a strong brand with which we are able to differentiate ourselves from the competition in key areas. The science and technology behind our products, our ability to develop total solutions for malocclusion, such as the recent introduction of Invisalign G5 for deep bite, and our proprietary SmartTrack aligner material are significant barriers to others seeking to enter the market.

Invisalign and design aligners have a significant market share since it was introduced in 2000. With demographic expansion in most Asian countries (every young age distribution), what prospects does this product have there?

The teen segment represents the largest portion of the orthodontic market and continues to be very important to Align. We believe the product is huge, especially in certain countries, and we intend to make Invisalign the product of choice for leading doctors.

You have worked in the health business before. What do you see as the particular challenges of the dental market?

The technology is moving so fast that doctors may not even realise it when it has arrived. In addition, increasing patient demands and sophistication are going to change the doctor-patient relationship.

What general prospects do you see for your company in Asia for the years to come?

We expect growth rates across the entire Asia Pacific region to continue outpacing growth in our international business. This is a very exciting time for Align and our prospects in this region are very positive. We are the clear leader in a huge underpenetrated market with a high level of clinical skill in Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong, for example. Increasing consumer sophistication in China and hence demand for Invisalign, large untapped segments in Japan and developing markets such as South-East Asia all offer a strong growth trajectory for Align across the region.

Thank you very much for the interview.
A-dec receives more awards for dental products

NEWBERG, Ore., USA: For the tenth consecutive year, A-dec has won the Townie Choice awards in the categories Best Patient Chairs, Best Operatory Delivery Systems, Best Dental Cabinetry, Best Operatory Lights, Best Stools and Best Waterline Systems. Considered the dentist’s choice for dental products and services, the winners are voted for annually by dental professionals who subscribe to the DentalTown magazine or are registered users of its website.

Established by Dr Howard Farran and Farran Media as a resource to help dentists make informed purchasing decisions, the Townie acclamation is an indication of manufacturing innovation, leadership and product reliability.

Every year since DentalTown’s first Townie Choice awards in 2003, doctors have voted A-dec best in class across multiple dental equipment categories. Of A-dec’s six category wins this year, all but Best Dental Cabinetry began in 2003.

According to A-dec, its chairs and delivery systems are central to the company’s A-dec 500, A-dec 400, and A-dec 300 product lines. The award for the A-dec LED dental light adds to the light’s growing list of accolades, which include THE DENTAL ADVISOR’s coveted Editors’ Choice award, an IHA Silver from the Industrial Designers Society of America, the international Red Dot Design Award, and 2012 Best New Product for Women voted by the American Association of Women Dentists, the company said.

In the dental cabinetry category, the A-dec Preference Collection also received the Townie Choice, as did the A-dec doctor’s stool and A-dec ICX for waterline maintenance.

Sirona partners with Japanese GC corporation

TOKYO, Japan/BENSHEIM, Germany: Sirona, a global provider of dental technology, has signed a co-operation agreement with GC. The Japanese dental company will produce CAD/CAM blocks from composite or other restorative materials for Sirona’s CEREC and inLab. GC Corporation complements the group of selected partner companies manufacturing high-performance materials for the milling of CAD/CAM Restorations, including VITA Zahnfabrik, Ivoclar Vivadent, Merz Dental, DENTSPLY and 3M ESPE.

GC produces consumables, equipment and facilities for dental practices and dental laboratories. Headquartered in Tokyo, it has become a global leader in glass ionomers, composites, ceramic layering and adhesive systems.

“GC is a prestigious dental company with a focus on Japan and other Asian markets. Since these markets are becoming increasingly important for our CAD/CAM business, we are pleased to have a material partner in the region that meets our high quality standards,” said Dr Joachim Pfeiffer, Vice-President of CAD/CAM Systems at Sirona. According to A-dec, its chairs are registered users of its web-site.

Japan is one of the largest growth markets for CAD/CAM restorations and prostheses. The country is already very well prepared for the change to CAD/CAM technology. Thus, innovative dental technology combined with high-quality materials is increasingly in demand by dentists, Sirona stated.

In the dental cabinetry category, Sirona partners with Japanese GC corporation. The CAD/CAM blocks from Sirona and its material partners are optimally matched to the MC XL milling unit. (Sirona)