

# **PRACTICAL CLINICAL COURSES**

A Service of the Gordon J. Christensen  
Career Development Program

## **V4714 Effective Use of Four-Handed and Six-Handed Dentistry**

Gordon J. Christensen, DDS, MSD, PhD

### **Materials Included**

C.E. Instruction Sheet  
Products List  
Clinician Responsible  
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References  
AGD Post-Test

**Gordon J. Christensen**  
**PRACTICAL CLINICAL COURSES**

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Gordon J. Christensen  
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*Sources of Products Discussed in*

**V4714 Effective Use of Four-Handed and Six-Handed Dentistry**

Presented by: Gordon J. Christensen, DDS, MSD, PhD

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***Product names, the products themselves, and company names change rapidly. Please contact the companies shown to confirm current information.***

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## PROGRAM

### **V4714 Effective Use of Four-Handed and Six-Handed Dentistry**

#### CLINICIAN RESPONSIBLE

**Gordon J. Christensen, DDS, MSD, PhD**  
CEO, Practical Clinical Courses  
CEO, CR Foundation  
Practicing Prosthodontist, Provo, Utah

#### GOALS & OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this video presentation, participants should be able to accomplish the following:

1. Describe the concepts promoted by "time and motion" studies of the '60s and '70s.
2. Describe and draw four different types of operatory designs.
3. List the advantages and disadvantages of the "behind-the-patient" operatory design.
4. List the advantages and disadvantages of the "over-the-patient" operatory design.
5. List the advantages and disadvantages of the side delivery operatory design using one cart or unit.
6. List the advantages and disadvantages of the side delivery operatory design using two carts or units.
7. Discuss the use of fixed cabinets in operatories.
8. Describe the ideal characteristics for the patient chair.
9. Describe the ideal characteristics for the doctor chair.
10. Describe the ideal characteristics for the assistant chair.
11. Discuss recommended infection control features in a dental sterilization room.
12. Discuss the tasks for dental assistants in room preparation, set-up, and clean-up.
13. Discuss the palm-thumb and the pencil instrument grasps.
14. Discuss the common-sense principles involved for instrument positioning and transfer.
15. Discuss dental assistant responsibilities for use of the operating light.
16. Describe proper use of high-velocity suction in all areas of the mouth.
17. Discuss the reasons and advantages for six-handed dentistry.
18. List tasks to be shared by two dental assistants involved with six-handed dentistry.
19. Discuss and draw positioning of the additional dental assistant when practicing six-handed dentistry.
20. Discuss the comparative clinical productivity when using one dental assistant (four-handed) vs. two dental assistants (six-handed).

## OVERVIEW

### **V4714 Effective Use of Four-Handed and Six-Handed Dentistry**

In the 1960's and early 1970's some dental schools taught four-handed dentistry. The concept became very well-known and almost mechanized in activity. Most dental students had the opportunity to work with dental assistants for at least some of their dental school experience. Federal funding allowed and encouraged teaching this concept. As Federal money became less available, the dental assistant utilization programs closed, and dental students went back to receiving no experience with dental assistants while in dental school. Several decades have passed with dentists graduating with little or no knowledge of how to effectively use a dental assistant.

This video shows how to effectively use one dental assistant, and it also shows how to use two dental assistants at the same time. The following and other topics are included in the presentation:

1. The concept of four-handed and six-handed dentistry
2. Operatory designs including: rear delivery, side delivery with one or two carts or units, and over-the-patient delivery
3. Use of fixed cabinets in operatories, the advantages and disadvantages
4. Characteristics of the ideal operating chair
5. Characteristics of the ideal doctor's chair
6. Characteristics of the ideal assistant's chair
7. Sterilization and tray set-up
8. Room and instrument preparation, set-up, and clean-up
9. Instrument grasps
10. Instrument positioning and transfer
11. Use of the operating light
12. Use of high-velocity suction
13. Operatory organization and cleanliness
14. Reasons for six-handed dentistry
15. Tasks to be shared by two dental assistants
16. Positioning for the additional assistant
17. Comparative productivity when using four-handed vs. six-handed dentistry

Practical, common-sense principles are presented and emphasized in this presentation. Practices incorporating the principles shown in the video will increase their productivity, enhance the self-esteem of their staff, and increase the enjoyment of practice for all employees.

## REFERENCES

### **V4714 Effective Use of Four-Handed and Six-Handed Dentistry**

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4. Christensen GJ. Developing a great dental team. JADA 1997; 128:1703-4.
5. Christensen GJ. Educating dental staff members for optimum patient service. JADA 1999; 130:1783-5.
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7. Finkbeiner, Betty. Four-Handed Dentistry: A Handbook of Clinical Application and Ergonomic Concepts. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001.
8. Finkbeiner BL. Selecting equipment for the ergonomic four-handed dental practice. The Journal of Contemporary Dental Practice 2001; 2(4):1-6.
9. Chlang PC, Johnson R. An approach to improving the six-handed technique in oral rehabilitation. JADA 1978; 96: 1020-4.
10. Finkbeiner BL. Four-handed dentistry revisited. The Journal of Contemporary Dental Practice 2000; 1(4):1-9.
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## POST-TEST

### **V4714 Effective Use of Four-Handed and Six-Handed Dentistry**

1. Rear delivery of operating instruments has one major advantage that:
  - a. the operatory can be clean, uncluttered, and apparently non-threatening to the patient.
  - b. the operating instruments are aimed directly at the patient's mouth.
  - c. it is the most efficient design for operative dentistry and fixed prosthodontics.
  - d. most dental assistants like this design the best.
2. The "over-the-patient" operatory design has the advantage of:
  - a. easy use of stand-up or sit-down dentistry.
  - b. being the most efficient design for operative dentistry and fixed prosthodontics.
  - c. the instruments are not visible to the patient.
  - d. a large work area behind the patient.
3. The side delivery operatory design has the advantage of:
  - a. the operatory is clean, uncluttered, and apparently non-threatening to patients.
  - b. being the most efficient operating design for operative dentistry and fixed prosthodontics.
  - c. most dental assistants like this design best.
  - d. being one of the most versatile of the designs for all types of dentistry.
4. Fixed cabinets and drawers in dental operatories:
  - a. should be filled with instruments needed during the procedures that can be removed from the drawers or cabinets at any time.
  - b. are to be used during the operating procedures.
  - c. should always have metal handles for easy cleaning.
  - d. should be kept to a minimum and used only before the procedure starts.
5. The dental operating chair should have:
  - a. a wide back for patient comfort.
  - b. a narrow back to allow the clinician to get close to the patient.
  - c. a thick back for strength.
  - d. at least 30 inches clearance from the floor.
6. The palm-thumb grasp:
  - a. is more difficult to control than a pencil grasp.
  - b. should never be used in the mouth.
  - c. offers optimum control when cutting rigid, hard-to-cut materials.
  - d. does not offer the ability to have finger or thumb additional support on the object being cut.
7. Instruments should be transferred to the dentist:
  - a. with the working end toward the dentist.
  - b. with the working end toward the patient.
  - c. with the instrument oriented in approximately the position it will be used in the mouth.
  - d. using two hands.

**POST-TEST (CONT'D)**

**V4714 Effective Use of Four-Handed and Six-Handed Dentistry**

- 8. When using six-handed dentistry, the additional assistant:
  - a. stands in the same position regardless of the operatory design.
  - b. always stands behind the patient.
  - c. moves around the patient as needed for the additional dental assistant tasks.
  - d. always stands on the dentist's side of the patient.
  
- 9. The additional dental assistant:
  - a. saves time because the primary assistant does not have to leave the patient.
  - b. may become the primary assistant for other patients.
  - c. is responsible for all tasks that would usually require the primary assistant to leave the patient or divert attention away from the patient.
  - d. all of the above.
  
- 10. At the beginning of a clinical procedure:
  - a. all instruments, handpieces, devices, supplies and other items are brought into the operatory.
  - b. the two dental assistants decide who will be the primary assistant.
  - c. both dental assistants and the dentist are responsible for cleanliness of the operatory.
  - d. all of the above.

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