

Better education, increased case acceptance

CLINICAL 360°
TEAM APPROACH

One clinician's take on the Polaris intraoral camera from Air Techniques.

BY DR. SHERI B. DONIGER

THE TEAM

In addition to our regular panel, guest contributors will also share their insights from time to time.



DR. SHERI DONIGER

Dr. Sheri B. Doniger is a leading dental clinician, author, educator, and consultant. An avid researcher, Dr. Doniger has authored numerous articles on topics ranging from periodontal disease to effective communications, and has presented many lectures with an ongoing focus on health, wellness, productivity and women in the dental industry.



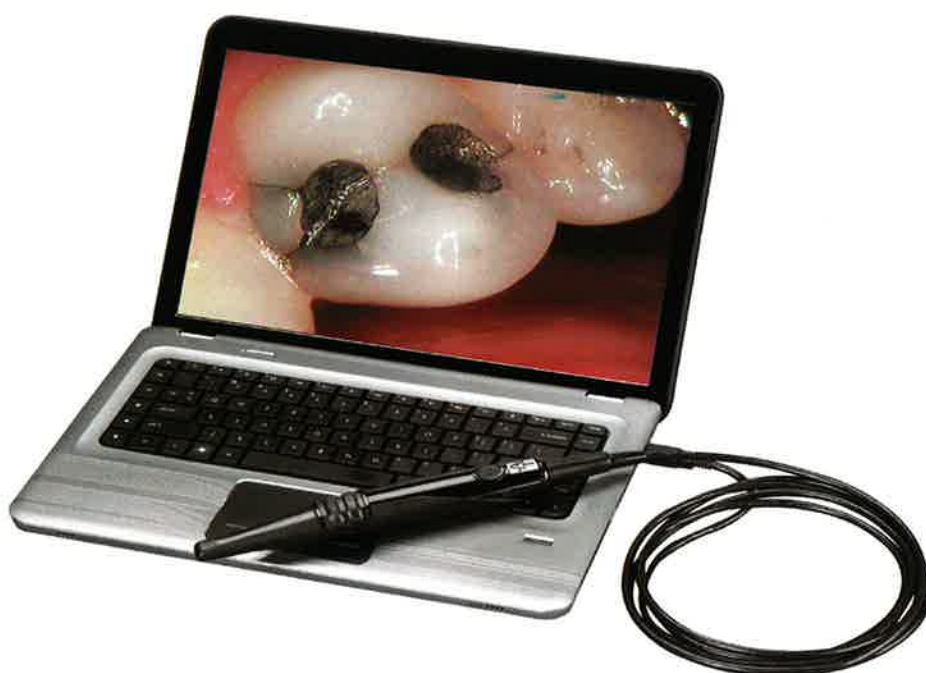
TINA CALLOWAY, CDA

In 17 years as a full-time dental assistant Tina Calloway, CDA, has served as President of the Piedmont Dental Assistant Society and as a clinical assisting coach. She is a member of the North Carolina Dental Assistant Association, the American Dental Assistants Association and AACD Team Advisory Council.



LIZ NIES, RDH

Liz Nies, RDH, EA, AS, is a graduate of Fones at the University of Bridgeport, class of 1984 and has been practicing dental hygiene for 29 years. Currently she is working clinically 4 days a week and consulting on assisted hygiene implementation and is a HygieneFusion coach.



Polaris intraoral camera

The Polaris Intraoral Camera provides optimal image quality that will aid in case acceptance. Its sleek body design features a 120 degree button ring for added comfort, optimal optics and broad focal range delivers exceptional image quality that will enhance your patient diagnosis. The fixed focus technology keeps objects from 6 mm to 40 mm in sharp detail with no need to adjust anything. The camera enables clinicians to reach all areas of oral cavity with minimal effort and maximum comfort. The capture-upon-release feature makes image capture easy.

THE PURPOSE

Year after year, survey after survey, DPR's readers affirm that when it comes to choosing products for their practices, colleague recommendations are vital. Here, we provide space for dental professionals - like you and your team - to reflect on the products they see making a difference.

The Air Techniques Polaris[®] Intraoral Camera has been an invaluable addition to our office's dental world. It has been amazing for education and production.

Let me preface this discussion by saying I am not a techno-person. I own my usual "I-" products that have made their way into

my life, but, as far as the office is concerned, I have only a few things, aside from my practice management software. The Polaris is one of them, and it is the best thing that happened to our bottom line.

A powerful tool

The idea of the intraoral camera is to show patients what they have before starting any dental procedures. This is a very powerful tool both for education and production. For every new patient, in addition to the usual diagnostics, we do a tour of their mouths with the Polaris, taking pictures, most notably, of the defective historic restorations and any existing periodontal pathology.

One great picture that always gets a response is the lingual anterior depicting calculus collection. The patient's first response usually is "I can't believe you look at that all day long," then he or she gets to, "I really need to floss more."

Seeing is believing

When you show patients a picture of their existing conditions they understand the need to replace faulty restorations. The gap between the tooth and a historic amalgam is more easily demonstrated with the Polaris, than, say, the usual two mirror technique.

Having patients actually see the gap as opposed to trying to arrange the mirror in their hand to the mouth mirror in our hand is much simpler and more effective.

It's easy to use

The Polaris intraoral camera is simple. Mine is installed on a laptop in the operatory. We do not have any fancier system.

Once I am finished with my tour of the mouth, I sit down in the dental assistant's chair and show patients my findings. Along with radiographs, the power of the camera intensifies the diagnosis, as patients can see problems in their own mouths. The camera wand is lightweight and ergonomic. It plugs into a USB port on my laptop and is easily moved away when we are finished. Some clinicians will mount the handpiece as a tray attachment. Sheaths are provided for infection control.

Patients love it

The best part: if you do not like the picture you took, just like a digital camera, you simply delete it (or don't save it) and start again. You are in control of your own personal patient education forum.

The camera's 120° button ring makes it easy to freeze, unfreeze and capture

images with one finger. Additionally, we revisit issues at recare appointments, using the "before" and "after," especially for patients with periodontal issues. So, more education. Our patients love this for many reasons. First, it shows our practice is technologically advanced. It gives patients something to talk about when they are referring our office. Second, although some say they don't want to see anything, mostly all our patients appreciate the pictures and say it is not too much information but good information.

Increased case acceptance

In this economy, we are all trying to increase our production with dentistry that truly does need to be done, and using the Polaris intraoral camera has been a great asset. We have definitely seen treatment plan acceptance increase. The Polaris intraoral camera is definitely one of my favorite things. ●

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