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Patti holds a publishing license with the American Dental Association for Current Dental Terminology and is an ADA Evidence Based Champion and member of the National Dental Practice-Based Research Network. *DentalCodeology: More Than Pocket Change* is her first book of a series designed to guide dental clinicians into the coding and electronic health records world.



### find out why PATTI DIGANGI BELIEVES THAT SPECTRA:

- Enables dental professionals to accurately and consistently measure caries risk.
- Offers the opportunity to develop treatment plans ideal for each patient.

# Spectra

## IF YOU CAN'T REPRODUCIBLY MEASURE IT, YOU CAN'T ACCURATELY MONITOR IT

In the 20th century, the gold standard for caries detection was an explorer and radiographs because cavitation was treated as a lesion needing repair. The words “caries” and “decay” were interchangeable. In the 21st century, we know caries is a biofilm-mediated infection.

Spectra from Air Techniques uses light-induced fluorescence to provide information for primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention as well as reproducible numeric risk information that demonstrates medical-dental necessity to patients and insurance carriers. If we can't accurately reproducibly measure it, we can't manage or heal it.

### 3 Levels of Prevention

By eliminating principal risk factors, primary prevention can happen in the earliest stages of infection to avoid breakdown. Secondary prevention occurs at a stage at which intervention may lead to an outright cure or a significant reduction in damage. Restorative dentistry restores tooth structure that has been destroyed by caries infection but does not eliminate the infection. Tertiary prevention reduces the risk of disease recurrence after restorative treatment. Spectra helps determine which level of prevention is needed.

As a dental hygiene clinician, I have

seen practices watch and wait for breakdown to occur; not out of any bad intent but because the gold standard detection devices could not detect an infection until there was significant breakdown and the window to primary and secondary prevention has already closed. Spectra is an objective means of monitoring previous watch areas and helps clinicians know how to proceed with preventive care/remineralization therapy. It can help objectively determine recall frequency.

### How It Works

Fluorescence of the metabolites of cariogenic bacteria are stimulated with a light wavelength of 405 nm. Spectra creates a glow with green indicating healthy enamel and red when the caries infection has invaded. The red fluorescence is analyzed and quantified with Visix analysis software. The map displayed is similar to a Doppler radar weather map. In addition, numeric data gives the practitioner, patient, and insurance carrier a specific score of severity and helps guide care.

### Consistent Reproducibility

Health and prevention is not a single point in time. When the patient returns for follow up, often practitioners are comparing unequal images. Spectra's image and

numeric values are saved, and its 10 mm distance spacer and fixed focus lens assist in consistent reproducibility.

Determining medical-dental necessity is not only for medical cross-coding. New Minnesota policy requires dentists, oral surgeons, and orthodontists to adopt a certified, interoperable electronic health record system, like their medical counterparts, by 2015. Dentistry will truly be integrated with medicine. Rote, routine, one-size-fits-all care is not supported in current science. Medical-dental necessity is the reason why a test, procedure, or instruction is performed; it is different from person to person and changes as the individual changes. Dentists and hygienists must provide consistent methodical documentation of medical-dental necessity for coding now and more so in the near future. Spectra provides a reproducible numeric scale to determine medical-dental necessity. **DPS**



For more information scan the QR Code.

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