

INTRODUCTION

This special supplement of *The International Journal of Oral & Maxillofacial Implants* presents the proceedings of the Third ITI Consensus Conference, which took place in August 2003 in Gstaad, Switzerland. The ITI (International Team for Implantology) is a scientific association with more than 350 members from 34 countries. The ITI organizes consensus conferences at 5- to 6-year intervals to discuss relevant topics in implant dentistry.

The first (1993) and second (1997) ITI consensus conferences primarily discussed basic surgical and prosthetic issues in implant dentistry. For the third Consensus Conference in 2003, the ITI Education Committee decided to focus the discussion on 4 special topics that have received much attention in recent years and for which numerous “novel” techniques have been advocated at major implant conferences for clinical application in daily practice. The ITI Education Committee elected a group leader for each of the 4 topics. The Consensus Conference Program Committee, composed of the chairman of the ITI Education Committee and the 4 group leaders, selected for each topic a working group of 15 to 20 clinicians and researchers with related expertise in the topic. Each group leader selected 2 to 4 assistants from his working group, who decided what needed to be addressed and who helped prepare for the consensus conference by writing review papers. The 4 topics and the group leaders were as follows:

- Group 1: Implants in extraction sockets (Leader: Christoph F. Hämmerle)
- Group 2: Esthetics in implant dentistry (Leader: Urs C. Belser)
- Group 3: Loading protocols for dental implants (Leader: David L. Cochran)
- Group 4: Implant survival and complications (Leader: Niklaus P. Lang)

The objectives of the ITI Consensus Conference were to review the current literature in peer-reviewed journals and discuss where sufficient evidence is available for certain clinical procedures and where evidence is currently lacking. In addition, each group was asked to review the prepared manuscripts, discussing them in detail and modifying them until agreed upon by all, and so reach a consensus on these papers. Based on these discussions, each group was asked to establish statements, which also included some clinical recommendations, and to put these statements forward at a plenary session, which included all conference participants. These statements were discussed extensively and altered as needed until they were accepted by all the conference participants.

The review papers and consensus statements published in this special supplement to *The International Journal of Oral & Maxillofacial Implants* are intended to serve as a guide to clinicians in the diagnosis, treatment planning, and management of patients requiring dental implant therapy. With the consensus statements as guidelines, it is hoped that clinicians will be better prepared to make informed surgical and prosthodontic treatment decisions that will further enhance the quality of care and predictability of treatment outcome for their patients.

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