Dear Readers,

Sometimes as orthodontists we tend to simplify what our specialty is about. Behind the simplicity—straightening teeth—there is a wide spectrum of facial, functional and physiological effects that we will generate, all of them intimately interconnected. The patient’s soft tissue is not self-supported, so an adequate volumetric amount of hard tissue underneath sculpts the facial harmony. Orthodontics affects important dental, skeletal, functional, postural, physiological, articular, facial and psychological areas for the patient. It is a powerful specialty in which the teeth are only a part.

As orthodontists, we are responsible for accomplishing a balanced mid- and lower third of the face by managing a correct functional and anatomical relation between the maxillae and mandible, harmonising the position of the teeth into an aesthetic interrelation, achieving a functional occlusion. Ultimately, we sculpt the patient’s soft tissue, providing facial proportion and a harmonic smile design.

In addition to aesthetics, correct functional occlusion and tooth alignment will promote a healthy condition of the maxillae and mandible, gingivae and teeth, preventing many potential systemic diseases related to periodontal or dental sickness.

This rare ability of our specialty to change the extrinsic traits, the facial features, and maintain simultaneously the facial icon, while enhancing the patient’s positive facial features, can also achieve the opposite effect by promoting the patient’s negative facial features, maybe obstructing the patient’s airway or ending up with incorrect functionality of the stomatognathic system.

Today, a new treatment modality has arisen in orthodontics, commonly known as “do it yourself”. This development signals that it is time to start teaching society about the real power of orthodontics.

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