

A new era and a new beginning in dentistry in dentistry

Uncertainty principle

Dr Eduardo Anitua has a private practice in Vitoria, Spain, where he focus his activity on implantology and oral rehabilitation. He is also the founder and scientific director of the BTI Biotechnology Institute. We asked Dr Anitua on his opinion about the current situation due to the corona pandemic.



In quantum mechanics, the uncertainty principle (also known as Heisenberg's uncertainty principle), implies that in general it is not possible to predict the value of a quantity with arbitrary certainty, even if all initial conditions are specified. This, in physics, means that the more precisely the position of some particle is determined, the less precisely its momentum can be predicted, and therefore its mass and velocity.

This principle can be extrapolated to the position of dentistry at this time. We find ourselves in a situation of total uncertainty where everything that we took for granted in our profession and in our day-to-day life is changing. This change is happening at such a dizzying rate that it is difficult for us to determine our position. The speed of the events that have been happening in the last days cause us

confusion and the feeling of not knowing where we are.

Closeness to the patient is inherent to the course of our profession, both physically (because of our work area) and personally. The dentist-patient relationship is based on trust, which makes the personal involvement and empathy with our patients the fundamental pillar where our relationship is sustained.

The current situation requires us to distance ourselves, as this is the way to curb this pandemic and thus to protect our essential heritage which is our health and that of the people around us. But this necessary distance prevents us from treating our patients with the usual closeness. The means of protection are to guarantee our health and the health of our patients and by extension that of all the people around us, but at the same time they are a physical, and to some extent psychological barrier that reminds us of the situation in which we live every second. We must learn to work in a different way, with more protection, controlling our physical and immunological defenses, we must also improve our habits, control our immunity and as a final step, to obtain a physical and mental balance, so necessary at this time.

This implies a series of changes that will bring us closer to control these uncertainties and distancing our fears away. We must be more energetic, and this strength has to come from within, with a scientific basis and emotional control. If we overcome this virus with perseverance, work, and science, it will make us stronger on the path to be followed. From this new perspective, we will be at the

starting point of a new and different future, keeping uncertainties away, based on the certainties that science brings us.

At this time, when the most honest and, in many cases, supportive and heroic behavior is emerging in our society, we must necessarily face up to our responsibility. Our clinic should be transformed into a more "aseptic" and perhaps less welcoming place, as it has already been so far. Our patients will have to distance themselves physically, and we will have to show our affection and closeness to them in a different way. Our agenda will be conditioned by the fact that patients do not meet in the same space and time. Our uniform will become something that we surgeons are already used to, although perhaps not so much the patients, but they will know that we are looking after their health.

It is a new era, a new beginning, and although it is being strange, we must face it with conviction and by removing the uncertainties. We have protocols and information, and I encourage you all to incorporate them in order to show how to live in a safer (healthier) way, but now, what we need the most is certainty, and that is why we will fight tirelessly day after day.

Come on, we can handle this, there is no doubt about it. Together we will overcome it, by separating and distancing ourselves... a nice contradiction, but architects already taught us that by moving the pillars away, the structures are more solid.