

EDITORIAL



Short implants: are they beneficial?

Implant dentistry is an everyday treatment modality today. With a strong evidence base and growing popularity of implants, there is little doubt over why implants are always the preferred choice of treatment for replacing missing tooth or teeth. Advent of newer designs also paved way for newer dimensions in implants which led to usage of short implants in atrophied jaws which were earlier not recommended to be replaced with implants. Short implants are manufactured for use in atrophic regions of the jaws. Although many studies report on short implants as ≤ 10 mm length with considerable success, not much evidence is available regarding ultra-short implants of < 8 mm length and their long term clinical success. Owing to the need for rehabilitation of such increasing number of atrophic jaws, the 7-mm standard implant was introduced in 1979. From the beginning, this implant was used either alone or in conjunction with longer implants in edentulous jaws, but, eventually, it was used in the treatment of partial edentulism as well. When considering these implants in function, the 1-, 3-, 5- and 10-year results showed a lot of failures among the short implants. In addition, to facilitate the replacement of a failing standard implant and to improve the success rate in compromised situations, wide-

diameter implants were introduced. The wide-diameter implant was first introduced to fulfill two indications: poor bone quality and/or quantity and replacement of a failing standard implant. Some authors have found that wide-diameter implants were successful when the length of the implant was compromised for situations where residual alveolar height was less. Therefore, there was a relationship for shorter and wide-diameter implants. Reconstruction of the atrophic mandible using short implants without augmentation procedures yielded, after more than 10 years of follow-up, a cumulative implant survival rate of 92.3%. A systematic review and metaanalysis on short implants conducted in 2014 provided robust analysis of using short implants (6mm) as a viable treatment option with predictable success rates. The study also pointed out that the failures that were reported were early failures and also had a better survival rates in the mandible compared to the maxilla. Short implants are currently available in a multitude of systems and are backed up by considerable success rates in clinical scenario.