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DEN 1218 OL30

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Responsive Essay

When I first started this class, I recently started working at a pediatric office as a dental assistant. Since I was working with children, it was very difficult for me to learn how to take a bitewing or periapical radiograph. I had prior knowledge of basic concepts from watching my mother take them at her office, however, I only knew how to take panoramic images by myself. Now that we are coming close to the end of the semester, my understanding of dental x-rays has greatly improved. Not only have I learnt how to take and interpret a full mouth series, I have learnt about the effects of radiation on the body. I have to take extra precautions to keep myself and my patients safe while being exposed to radiation.

It is necessary to take X-rays to evaluate anything that cannot be clinically seen. This is important because it can help prevent any diseases from proceeding. As stated in the article, “Refusing Dental Radiographs,” “Working without necessary radiographs is just like working in the dark” (Watterson 2012.) This can cause a dilemma if a patient refuses to get an x-ray taken. Some patients refuse dental radiographs because they are uncomfortable about the amount of radiation that they are receiving, religious beliefs, presence of tori, or they have a strong gag reflux. In this situation, I will be confident to explain to the patient how the benefits of radiation highly outweigh the risks. I would educate my patients that we are being exposed to radiation every day from natural and man-made sources including cell phones and the sun. I would explain how we are using minimal radiation to take the x-ray and that I will be protecting them by putting a lead apron and thyroid collar on them. Additionally, I would emphasize to the patient that the radiographs are important for the doctor to diagnose pathology. Without the x-rays, dangerous outcomes could occur. My main goal as a dental hygienist is to get my patient’s trust so that they will amend to my recommendations. If the patient still refuses to get their radiographs taken, this can be challenging for the dental staff. Since the dental staff could be held liable if there is failure to diagnose any abnormalities, the dentist will often offer to take less radiographs or dismiss the patient.

Citation:

Watterson, Dianne. “Refusing Dental Radiographs.” *RDH*, 1 Sept. 2012, www.rdhmag.com/pathology/oral-pathology/article/16405764/refusing-dental-radiographs.