**Cross Cultural Awareness and Perceptions of Beauty in Dental Practice**

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Ancient Romans are known for their cosmetic beauty and the esthetic of teeth is among their cosmetic beauty. Continuing from Ancient Roman until present days people still consider teeth whitening as very important. Ancient Roman developed the concept of prosthetic teeth and the ways of cleaning and protecting their teeth. In ancient Rome, teeth are not only known for their functions but it is also known for their esthetic purposes.

Firstly, having whitened teeth are the primary requirements in Ancient Roman and in modern days beauty standard. People discovered many different ways to keep their teeth white. Ancient Romans tried all the possible methods to keep their teeth whiten to the extent that urines are used in their toothpaste. Scientist found that the ammonia contained in urines can actually function as a whiten agent. Variations of ammonia were well used into the 18th century as a whiten agent. According to the article, this might have been the reason why Ancient Romans used urines in their toothpaste. (Geissberger, 2010)

The first appearance of toothpaste was dated back to the first century. Nowadays, the toothpaste we use has multi-functions, it functions as a whiten agent, protection of cavity, and breath freshener. On average, there are more than many bacteria in your mouth after eating food. The fluoride in toothpaste helps to kill these bacteria in your mouth. According to an internet research, using toothpaste can improve the enamel’s resistance of acids produced by bacteria. Killing these bacteria will also polish your teeth and cleans your breath. Pumice powder and baking soda were used by the Ancient Roman as breath sweetener. As technology improves, we can now whiten our teeth with laser called the light activity treatment.

Secondly, Ancient Romans discovered their own treatment for the certain decayed area on the teeth. They tried their best to preserve the teeth that were infected with cavity by filling the teeth with linen. (Geissberger, 2010) They did not want to lose their teeth because they knew the importance of the teeth’s functions. Another reason why teeth are so important was because it had esthetic purposes. Ancient Romans poet Ovid wrote “You can do yourself untold damage when you laugh if your teeth are missing too long or irregular”. Judging from the quote, Ancient Romans prized good teeth hygiene.

However, using linen to fill up the cavity isn’t a proper way to save teeth from cavity. In modern times, we have discovered various treatments to save teeth from cavity. The most popular treatments are composite and amalgam. Dentist will clean up the decayed area before applying the filling materials onto teeth. Composite treatment uses resin cement as filling materials and its color is similar to teeth color. Then the blue curing light will be used for 60 seconds to finish the composite treatment. Amalgam treatment uses mercury as filling materials and it doesn’t have a natural teeth color instead it is silver. This treatment is considered to be more risky and harmful since the toxic in mercury can affect people’s health. However, Amalgam treatment tends to last longer and more durable than the composite treatment.

The prosthetic restoration process was originally developed by the Ancient Romans. Archaeologists explored a mausoleum within a Roman necropolis and they discovered a female corpse that has gold wiring that string together her teeth. Ancient Romans paid serious attention to their teeth. This is one of their practices in preserving their teeth for esthetic purposes. They discovered various materials to produce prosthetic teeth such as bone, ivory, paste, or gold restoration. Gold wiring was used as supporting materials to hold the position of their prosthetic teeth. Since there were no dentists back in ancient Rome, teeth treatments were practiced by medical doctors.

Nowadays, higher education exists and special trainings are required for dentists and dental technicians. There are better technology and equipments to assist the dentists and dental technicians. This will allow dentists and dental technicians to achieve a more efficient way in teeth restoration. And there are more quality materials to choose for the prosthetic such as metal, acrylic, porcelain for the crown. For special cases, patient without teeth or with most of their teeth gone, they can consider a complete denturist or implant. Crowns and denturists are more popular and are more available to consumers because they affordable for most people. Crown is customized to cover the surface of the teeth that we can see. Implant is a prosthetic tooth within the extension pot and plant into the bone on the residual ridge. It will be more suitable for consumers demand; it can last a lifelong and much easier for people to take care. There is no need worrying about its degeneration unlike the crowns. However, it is much more expensive than the crowns.

In conclusion, Ancient Romans had developed a good sense of importance for the teeth’s functions and their esthetic. They discovered ways of protecting and cleaning their teeth, and practiced treatments for cavity. They also established a beauty standard for teeth. Though, much has changed over the course of history, however, the establishment and inventions of Ancient Romans remained as a foundation of today’s inventions. As technology advances, it will bring further improvement to what has been accomplished by the Ancient Romans.

**References:**

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