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Esthetic dentistry and the new beautiful

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The pattern of dental esthetics has changed. I mean, it has already changed. Not that it is the beginning of a movement or a trend that points to changes, not really. We are receiving in our offices patients who ask for a new esthetic; the beautiful of today is another, very different from the beautiful of a short time ago. What happened?

The discussion about what pleases the eyes of the beholder, the beautiful, esthetics as beauty, is quite broad and complex, and is even a matter

of philosophical concern. But it is worth noting here that nature has always been the greatest reference of the beautiful - Michelangelo's David is an example of this, an enlarged scale sculpture of a man with his body exposed, exhibiting proportions that are considered beautiful by those who contemplate them. Although it is a difficult task to define in words what is beautiful, to identify beauty in things we observe is simple and we do it all the time. In this same way, we dentists,

How to cite: Kabbach W. Esthetic dentistry and the new beautiful. J Clin Dent Res. 2017 Jul-Sept;14(3):30-3.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14436/2447-911x.14.3.030-033.ind>

Submitted: April 11, 2017 - **Revised and accepted:** May 02, 2017

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when analyzing smiles in the perspective of the natural - that is, having nature as reference -, look for smiles considered beautiful, and, by assessing the similarities and differences between them, we can establish patterns that, if replicated, provide more beauty and harmony to smiles considered ugly.

In Dentistry, nature has always permeated dental esthetic; I am sure you have already studied the esthetic checklists of well-established authors such as Pascal Magne and Urs Belser , Mauro Fradeani and Dario Adolfi . These esthetic conference lists are guides to aspects to be observed for dual purpose: first, identifying deviations from the pattern that need to be corrected; second, identifying structures within the standard that must be preserved and serve as a reference during the esthetic correction steps so that, after a treatment, the aspects within the patient's natural esthetic pattern prevails and his smile can be considered beautiful.

There is no mystery about the new beauty pattern to which I dedicate this column; a quick inspection at the media is enough to see a large number of people and published characters displaying smiles with really white square-shaped teeth, with closed embrasures, with little or no difference in width and height among the anterior teeth, all aligned, with no dominance of the central incisors, very bright and with no surface texture. This is the new standard. And it is not a matter of personal taste - if we dentists think it is beautiful or ugly - that is the wish of most patients.

Our suspicion is obvious, since we have become accustomed to working with a pattern that, at present, does not match the patients' wishes. The standard of esthetic dentistry where natural beauty was sought no longer makes sense and we have lost, therefore, the greater reference of nature as beautiful. But is there any problem

with that? The great question that remains open is which, after all, will be the reference from this new standard, since naturalness now fails to guide the beautiful and we are, therefore, without an important source of inspiration. Nature can be observed, described and pursued as ideal, and the lack of it as a reference opens precedents for exaggerations. Gaps are opened for the creation of true aberrations, and worse, they have started to be considered beautiful.

In the clinical routine, how many times, when proving a diagnostic wax-up in the mouth (mock-up technique) performed by excellent dental technicians, the patient, dissatisfied with the natural shape of the teeth, requests that changes be made until arriving at this new pattern, the unnatural pattern. Not having nature as a reference, it is impossible to justify, for example, the exaggerated dimensions of the lateral incisors with the answer: "there are no such laterals." Now there are, therefore, as without a reference, you can invent whatever you want, even if in nature you do not find such dimensions. The professional who is concerned with ethical issues, faces a great dilemma: abandoning nature as a reference or not meeting the patients' wishes?

I do not intend to terminate this question here, but I want to consider that the loss of the natural as an esthetic reference affects all areas of esthetics in general. I think that nature, which is always sovereign, will be a reference for human beings - who, in the urge to challenge it with their inventive mind, create new patterns, which in turn change over and over again. But we dentists, because we are professionals in the health area, must always seek prudence and opt for procedures that can be reversed, to avoid future frustrations, when patients with super white square and non-dominant teeth look for us because they want to once again set a new standard.





Figure 1: Initial aspect of the face of the patient who seeks esthetic improvements of the smile. **Figure 2:** In closer approximation of anterior teeth. **Figure 3:** Patient's face smiling, with mouth waxup test; in this proposal, we sought to reproduce the esthetic aspects having the standard of nature as a reference. **Figure 4:** It is possible to notice the dominance of the central incisors, asymmetric embrasures, teeth with individualized anatomy, and surface texture, seeking to reproduce the natural characteristics of the teeth. **Figure 5:** Image of the patient's face that guided the addition of composite resin over the mock-up. **Figure 6:** Teeth compatible with what can be called a new esthetic pattern: closed embrasures, teeth with width and height similar to each other and with aligned incisal edges, without the centrals dominance.