

Bite

Better business for dentists

face value

Dr Myles Holt is pushing for greater freedom for dentists to use facial injectables like Botox in their surgeries. But not everyone agrees with him

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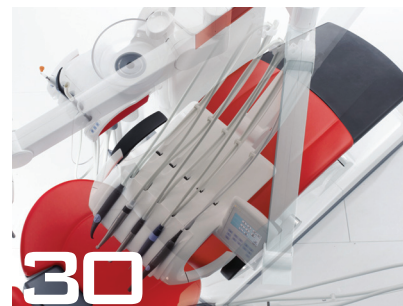
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Bite
Better Insurance for dentists



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Agent for change

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e has a practice in Melbourne, another in Singapore and is planning to hang a shingle in New Zealand this year. He's the director of the Australian Academy of Dento-Facial Aesthetics (AADFA) which represents hundreds of practitioners and has paved the way for dentists to advance the art and science of aesthetic dentistry through the responsible administration of facial injectables. He was recently awarded a Fellowship in the International Academy of Dental Facial Aesthetics in New York. And he runs a separate business that

consults to the international dental industry in terms of lecturing, specialist courses, social media and boutique product distributorship. Dr Myles Holt, it is safe to say, is not your average dentist. And he never has been.

In fact, immediately upon graduation from university in 1999, it became obvious that Holt was not one to follow a well-trodden path. While other graduates sought employment in local dental practices, Holt instead became the first student from the University of Sydney to join the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), based in Broken Hill, NSW.

After pioneering the program that exists for students within the RFDS, he ventured into private practice in rural NSW, but not for long. The next big move, in 2001, was to London where he worked until 2007 in private practice with an entrepreneurially inclined group of specialists who were shaping the 'dental spa' concept. This experience, including facial aesthetics education undertaken in the US and Europe, would heavily influence his future direction.

"It's amazing how only now, years down the track, am I able to look back and clearly identify the skills and experience that each role or period in my life and career gave me and that were vital to the success of what I

Few dental experts have experienced the level of success that has characterised the multi-faceted career of Dr Myles Holt, and few will change the industry as he is currently doing. But such a track record doesn't come without its challenges.

By Chris Sheedy



"In my years after graduation I only focused on one goal—to get as much and as varied experience as possible from as many areas of dentistry and life as possible."

Dr Myles Holt

do now. I'd like to pretend it was all strategically planned but it wasn't," Dr Holt smiles as we speak in his stylish Singapore apartment with its views over Marina Bay to the stunning Marina Bay Sands complex and the ocean beyond. "In my years after graduation I only focused on one goal—to get as much and as varied experience as possible from as many areas of dentistry and life as possible. I knew that if I travelled the world and gained vast knowledge and experience in many different arenas, one day all of that would align to enable me to do something special.

"Those years in London also improved my life skills. I developed a keen interest in health and fitness and worked my way through the ranks of the fitness industry to become an international trainer and presenter. The personal development I received in order to perform this role gave me the confidence and presenting skills that I rely on today to facilitate the various trainings for AADFA around Australia and overseas, and to lecture globally on dento-facial aesthetics, social media for dentists and branding for dentists. It also gave me a keen interest in health and fitness and the interplay between nutrition, general system health and oral health. This influences the types of products my boutique dental distributorship now offers such as a scanner that measures a patient's anti-oxidant levels, which have proven to be a significant factor in periodontal disease."

Facial injectables controversy

Dr Holt used to refer patients to specialists for facial aesthetics procedures but the results, he realised again and again, were disappointing. The relatively poor standard of the work, of course, also reflected badly on the tooth work that Dr Holt had done on the patient. Overall outcomes then, were less than ideal. "I saw the benefit in using my knowledge and skills to manage the case from start to finish, a philosophy that was appreciated by my patients as well," Dr Holt says.

Patients immediately understood the idea that they're not just a smile or a set of teeth, Dr Holt says. "They understood that by treating the teeth we can only improve their concerns so much, but by treating the surrounding tissues as well we can truly complete the picture and take their results to the next level. Patients also understood the logic behind dentists providing this treatment for them and were readily accepting of the concept. They had formed long-term, trusted bonds with their dentists and they knew their dentist could not only provide accurate, safe and comfortable injections in the delicate facial structures, but that they dealt with facial aesthetics every day of their professional lives."

So Dr Holt trained further in facial aesthetics but in doing so realised much of the training in the Australian market was inadequate. As he attempted to rectify the situation, the main objections to his plans came from within the industry itself, from bodies such as the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) and the Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australasia (CPSA).

"The strongest argument the president of the CPSA could come up with recently was that there are enough doctors to do these procedures so dentists don't need to. That's like Toyota saying to Ferrari, 'Hey guys, we build enough cars for everyone to get around in so you may as well pack it in!' Competition is never a bad thing in our eyes. It keeps everyone on their toes and striving to be better," Dr Holt says.



Quote

Dr Myles Holt

"Any criticism that does come from dentists is quickly retracted once they take the time to learn about these materials, the procedures and what we are trying to achieve."

And Dr Holt says the DBA's objection, an interim policy proposing to limit the use of Botulinum Toxin by dentists to the treatment of TMJ/tooth grinding, was discovered to be inadequately investigated, "fundamentally flawed" and "completely unworkable". The AADFA made a formal call for the policy to be withdrawn.

The Interim Policy, still in place on the DBA website (the DBA preferred not to comment for this story), says: "The issues surrounding the use of botulinum toxin and dermal



Dr Myles Holt at work in his surgery. He says the use of Botox in Australia is falling behind international standards.

fillers are complex and the regulatory environment that existed across states and territories prior to the commencement of the national registration and accreditation scheme varied. The Board continues to examine these issues further within its mandate of public protection, however the Board has agreed, as an interim measure, to release this policy. The Board recognises that in some jurisdictions botulinum toxin could be used by registered dentists for the treatment of Temporomandibular joint disorder/dysfunction.”

Dr Holt says that education on the topic of botulinum toxin and its uses within dentistry is all-important in the understanding of, and judging of, the matter. “Any criticism that does come from dentists is quickly retracted once they take the time to learn about these materials, the procedures and what we are trying to achieve,” he says. “This has been our biggest battle—educating the profession about the advances with these procedures that are happening internationally. It’s an area in which Australian dentists are falling behind.”

“We do have some dentists coming to our training who

are initially quite sceptical. This soon changes when they understand the materials and methods and see how perfectly suited dentists are to be offering these procedures.”

Social media

One of Dr Holt’s greatest concerns for the dental industry is the lack of competence in the area of social media. The lectures and training sessions that he carries out with industry groups and businesses throughout Australia, Asia, Europe and the USA are often on this topic.

“My biggest message to dentists is to just get into social media,” he says. “A lot of dentists don’t even have websites so social media is a completely foreign concept. This is a very conservative profession populated by people who are very cautious by nature so I think a lot of dentists are a little bit afraid of the concept.”

“But these days you have to be there and you really must have that conversation going on with patients. It is not just a marketing tool—it really is an opportunity to establish yourself in the community as a recognised expert. The people who do it well take the time to commit to giving something to the process to ensure their patients get as much as they can out of it,” says Dr Holt.

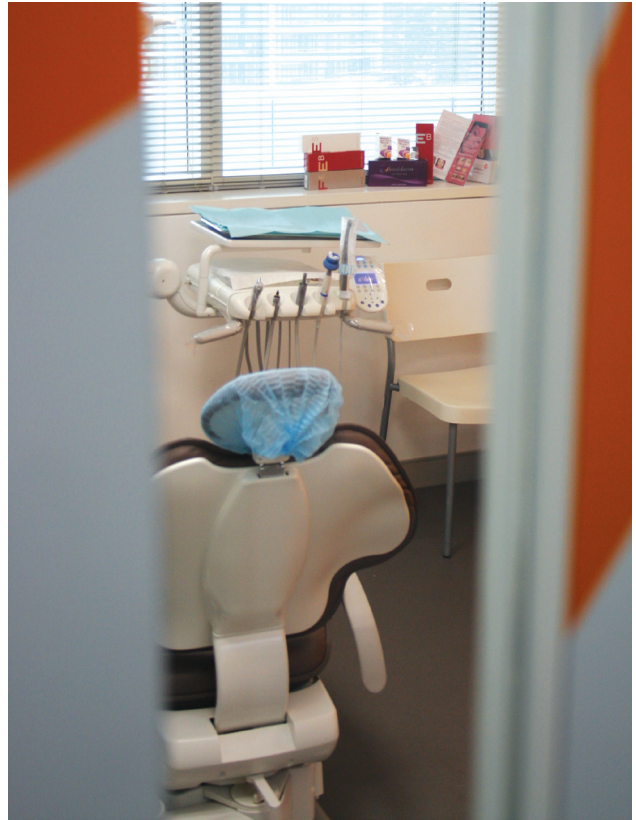
This year Holt has set up lectures at several major institu-

tions, including James Cook University and the University of Sydney, on the use of botulinum toxin in dentistry. He has also launched the Asian Academy of Dento-Facial Aesthetics to continue to develop the part of the dental industry to which his name is now permanently attached. And that is exactly the way Holt sees his role in the industry, as one who develops and advances the field for the combined sakes of the practitioners and their patients.

"Dentists are not trying to perform new or radical procedures here," he says. "We are talking about procedures that are already used by lesser-trained individuals across Australia every day. What we are talking about is allowing patients to receive treatment from the most qualified and experienced health practitioners."

"And in terms of the patients, I like to think my work enhances their lives. We receive emails daily from other dentists who have trained with our organisation and who are so appreciative of the effort we make to advance the dental profession. They often have great success stories of how they have truly enhanced their patients' treatment and taken the outcomes to the next level by approaching each specific case as more than just a set of teeth."

"By treating their patients more holistically the results are better than ever. That is what this is all about—advancing the profession so that the outcomes for patients are superior. Our battle is to get people to look at the facts and realise that denying dentists this ability would actually be denying patients the best possible treatment." □



"We're talking about procedures that are already used by lesser-trained individuals every day," says Dr Holt.

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