Smith is well aware of the shifting demands practitioners are facing today. Increasing service levels, changing expectations of patients, and achieving a competitive edge through up-to-date technology and procedures place increasing pressure on health care professionals in terms of both their time and resources, he said. At the recent Australian Dental Congress in Brisbane, Dental Tribune Asia Pacific had the opportunity to talk to him about this subject, and why new technology might not necessarily help reduce the burden.

Dental Tribune Asia Pacific: Mr Smith, has the dental business changed much, and what are the main challenges of today compared with the past?

Gary Smith: The changing expectations of patients are one of the greatest challenges the industry has faced over the years. Patients’ demands are increasing, along with their expectations of the level of service to be provided. The acceptance of the level provided by dental practitioners at times may differ from the level of service the patient actually expects, however.

The intrusion of government’s and health insurers’ requirements has changed over the years, and believe that the provision of services will become more complicated as a result of further involvement of these two groups. Of course, one of the greatest challenges remains the running of a small to medium enterprise. This, as well as the increasing red tape and making a profit, will always pose a challenge.

Are practitioners today more likely to neglect their work-life balance in favour of patients?

This depends on the age group of the practitioners and whether they are owners or contractors. Veterans, baby boomers and Generation X practitioners generally struggle with work-life balance and have to tend to their patients first. Generation Y practitioners in contrast are very much aware of their work-life balance in the first instance is to recognise that there is a disparity between the urban and the remote rural areas, and it usually needs a very special person to set up a private business in remote places. This can be a substantial financial and time commitment.

The Renaisance of a Smile

The scientific program has been organised in such a way that the excellence of the artists of the Renaissance period will be reached again by the speakers who will present how to give back to patients a beautiful smile. All topics involved in this difficult task will be analysed and discussed by leading authors in their fields. The conservatories, the prosthesis, periodontal, orthodontic and endodontic approach will be covered to obtain not only beautiful teeth but a “renaissance” smile within a short time.

The social events will be organised in the most traditional approach will be covered to obtain not only beautiful teeth but a “renaissance” smile within a short time.

The social events will be organised in the most traditional way. The most effective strategy in the first instance is to recognise that there is a work-life balance problem. Once it can be identified, it is then a matter of putting a series of strategies in place to manage the problem. These strategies may include the employment of a practice manager, mentoring other staff to take over certain aspects of the business, and increasing clinical staff to relieve work overload.

Certainly, all these come at a cost to the business, but the practitioner has to determine what he or she wants out of the business. For too long in the health care profession have we allowed the tail to wag the dog; it is time for practitioners to take control of their own strategy and destiny.

Thank you very much for this interview.