

Interview

Interview with Dr. John Minichetti, incoming president of AAID

Conducted by Dr. David Hochberg, DDS, Editor, AAID News

DR. HOCHBERG: Dr. Minichetti, tell us about your implant dentistry journey. How did you become interested in offering these services to your patients?

DR. MINICHETTI: I was lucky. Early on, during my GPR residency at Mount Sinai Medical Center, I met Dr. David Hoexter, a periodontist, who was one of AAID's past executive officers. I knew he was doing implants, and we became friends. We published an article together about bone grafting material. At the same time, I landed an associate position for Dr. Robert Spalton, an AAID member and a prosthodontist who called himself an "implantologist." I worked with him for about three years placing blades and subperiosteals. It



Dr. John Minichetti practices implant dentistry in Englewood, New Jersey at his Center for Implants and Aesthetics at Englewood Dental.

was amazing. I'd never seen these implant rehab procedures done before.

I recall running into one of my dental school instructors who asked what I was doing. I told him about my implant experiences. I recall him saying, "Stay away from

that stuff. You're going to get yourself into trouble." That's all I needed to hear. I did just the opposite.

Dr. Hoexter introduced me to **Drs. Ken Judy, Leonard Linkow, Norman Cranin and Frank LaMar.** That's how I got more involved with the AAID and implant dentistry.

DR. HOCHBERG: Did you have any formal training in implants while in dental school or after completing your GPR?

DR. MINICHETTI: There was no formal implant training in the late 70s. In my entire four years of dental school the only mention of dental implants was a one-hour lecture by the endodontic department on endodontic stabilizers used for mobile teeth. I learned through the mentoring of Dr. Spalton. I didn't have the opportunity to attend an AAID MaxiCourse®, so I had to take courses I could find. I attended AAID and other meetings, read Dr. Linkow's and Dr. Bränemark's textbooks and looked through old copies of *Journal of Oral Implants* at Mount Sinai Medical School library.

Today doctors are more fortunate, and I would encourage them to take our

AAID courses including the AAID MaxiCourse® which can help them increase their knowledge and proficiency in implant dentistry.

DR. HOCHBERG: Dr. Minichetti, share with the membership some of the goals you might have for the AAID during your tenure as President.

DR. MINICHETTI: AAID's mission statement says we provide education, research and credentialing to benefit not only our members but the public. One of my goals is to continue to validate our testing and credentialing. We're encouraging the ABOI to undertake involvement with the American Board of Dental Specialties, offering a new alternate certifying Board for Dental specialties, besides the ADA. I'm all for that process. We hope that will evolve into another avenue for States and dental boards, to recognize dental specialties.

Secondly, I want to increase the level of education within our Academy. We offer very good education at our annual and district meetings but, I really think we need to get more education for members as a continuum. Not all dentists

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Dr. Minichetti strongly believes in the value of education including hands-on opportunities to learn. He hosts live surgery demonstrations.

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can commit to our MaxiCourses®. I would like to see the AAID offer sponsored courses to allow dentists to obtain more implant education on certain topics and work toward credentialing.

Also, many are completing our MaxiCourse® and are seeking additional education. I would like to see more AAID hands-on and live-surgical courses — maybe even a MaxiCourse® 2.0 — for doctors who want to get more education and experience. We could start this by partnering with some of our AAID credentialed members who are already providing these live surgery courses. I'm looking to increase the level of education above the basic, to moderate and advanced levels. This will allow our members and non-members to go to the AAID web site and find the courses they feel fit their needs. I believe education is really the foundation on how our Academy can grow.

DR. HOCHBERG: Dr. Minichetti, the educational opportunities for our members really are endless. Please comment on your involvement with MaxiCourses®.

DR. MINICHETTI: I'm currently the Director of the Las Vegas AAID MaxiCourse®. We are in our fourth year and our group



Dr. Minichetti and his wife Joanne.

has been growing. I became involved with MaxiCourses® years ago when I was asked to present at various courses by **Dr. Shankar Iyer** in India, Asia and Abu Dhabi, **Dr. LaMar** in Iran and the late **Dr. Norman Cranin** at NYU. The MaxiCourses® allow doctors to attain the 300 hours required to sit for the Associate Fellow examination to become credentialed with our Academy. The curriculum for our MaxiCourse® covers lots of the basic sciences behind implantology and also offers different levels of hands-on participation — from pig's jaws to cadavers and life-like training models. We've had some live surgery programs where we can take the doctors in smaller groups and train them to treat live patients. This in an area that I think our Academy needs expand.

MaxiCourse® attendees see presentations and lectures by some of the world-renowned clinicians, most of them our own credentials AAID members. Speakers lecture in smaller

class sizes, allowing for more interaction with the participants.

DR. HOCHBERG: Dr. Minichetti, what do you say to the potential new member as to why a membership in the AAID is beneficial and why they should even consider becoming a credentialed member?

DR. MINICHETTI: The pursuit of credentialed status will challenge the doctor to learn more and study harder. By achieving credentials, you will separate yourselves from other dentists. Today you see signs on every street corner advertising an implant dentist. But what can really differentiate you from the rest, is having a bona fide AAID credential. The AAID has been and continues to be on the forefront of validating our credentials before the state boards and legislatures. The AAID is also a source for implant education. All members can now have access to hundreds of full journal articles on our website. Members get our JOI, newsletter and discount to all of our national, district and educational meetings. The better educated implant dentist will perform implant dentist more routinely and become a better overall clinician, providing his or her patients with better care. The benefits are professionally, economically and personally rewarding.

DR. HOCHBERG: Please share with the membership what you believe to be some of the challenges that may lie ahead for the AAID.

DR. MINICHETTI: First and foremost, I do believe the AAID, future is quite bright. Of course there are going to be challenges in any organization. The number one challenge is growth of the organization. The AAID is growing at a good rate, particularly when we compare it to other dental organizations. But I think there is still room for us to increase our membership. I believe strength in numbers is good for our Academy, particularly with the efforts we're making on recognition of our AAID credentials. I would like to see our organization attract younger dentists and recent graduates. I think one thing our organization needs is youth to help our Academy continue to grow.

Another challenge our organization has is protecting the credentials of our members. There are a lot of specialties out there that feel they are the only ones that are qualified to perform implant-related procedures. We are going to great lengths to prove that our ABO/ID and our AAID credentialing process is rigorous — in fact, maybe even more rigorous than some other specialty programs. These efforts should be continued since it separates our implant organization from others.

DR. HOCHBERG: Dr. Minichetti, we now have international members and programs abroad. How will this impact the organization over this next five years?

DR. MINICHETTI: All major companies are expanding their foreign growth and international presence. I think that we should be no different. The world is smaller, more connected, and now travel is common from country to country. The AAID is growing internationally and I think it's a good thing for our Academy. American education in general is viewed as the premiere throughout the world, and I think the AAID can benefit from that perception.

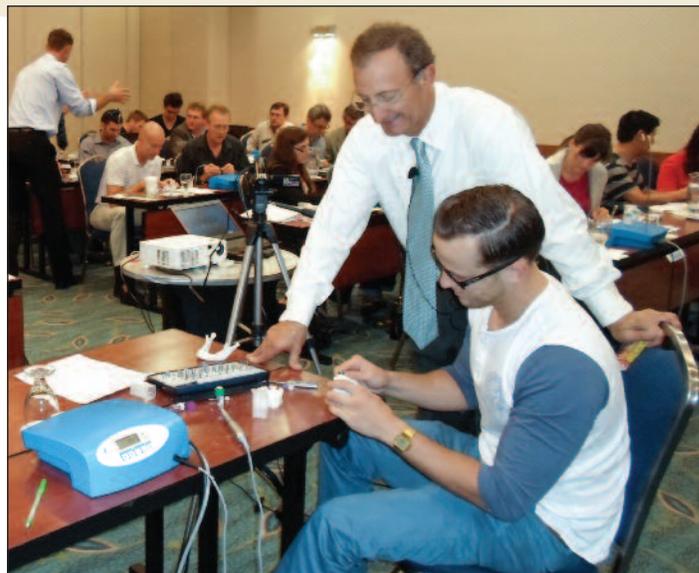
The AAID has the name, networking, renowned speakers, and reputation to provide doctors from around the world with the best dental implant education available. This year AAID was represented at WCOI-AAID meeting in Korea, by **Dr. John DaSilva** and **Dr. Larry Bush**, and UAE international dental conference in Dubai by **Dr. Shankar Iyer** and DGZI meeting in Germany, by me. Our AAID international networking is helping to spread the word about our great organization around the globe.

Next year is shaping to be busy one for the AAID. Besides planning to bring more international speakers to our 2014 Annual meeting,

we are scheduling an AAID Strategic Plan Meeting to look at our international growth. Some of the discussions will include looking at the benefits of affiliating with more international groups and partnering with other international associations at meetings abroad. I think the international marketplace is really an untapped source for membership growth which will benefit all our members worldwide.

DR. HOCHBERG: Please tell us a little bit about yourself — your practice, how you enjoy spending your leisure time.

DR. MINICHETTI: I've been blessed. I have been in private practice now for over 25 years, and I've been lucky enough to be involved with implant dentistry for that entire time. I have been privileged to combine clinical dentistry with education. I'm a former faculty member of prosthodontics at Fairleigh Dickenson University, and I taught at the GPR residency at Englewood Hospital for over 20 years. **Dr. Nick Caplanis**, our current president, was a general practice resident of mine! So I've always incorporated a philosophy of doing clinical and academic dentistry at the same time. I'm lucky that I'm with a great group of doctors in my multispecialty practice. My partner, Dr. Anna Hong, and associate **Dr. Joseph D'Amore**,



Dr. Minichetti is the Director of the AAID/Las Vegas MaxiCourse®.

(Associate Fellow AAID) have been instrumental allowing me to spend time teaching, running courses and volunteering with the AAID.

On the personal side I've also been blessed. I have a loving family. My wife of over 32 years has been a great support to me throughout my career. In fact she herself is a leader in the community. She's Mayor of the town we live in, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, another volunteer position I might add.

We are fortunate to have four beautiful daughters — Lauren, Nina, Alyssa and Cara. In my spare time, I love to spend time with my family and I like playing tennis — if I can play a couple times a week, then it's been a great week for me.

DR. HOCHBERG: Dr. Minichetti, do you have any closing comments or thoughts?

DR. MINICHETTI: I will never forget the early days when I was introduced to implant dentistry and how exciting it was. I thought it

was miraculous to see how these patients could be treated with an alternative to dentures. People who were dental cripples were traveling from Europe and had their lives changed into normal functioning human beings who became more confident and successful.

Years ago, when I looked for education, I went to the AAID. They were a family of expert clinicians, teachers and researchers, committed to the field and willing to share their knowledge. That was my source then and I think it's still the source today for anyone involved with this field. The Academy is there to help our members and the profession become better implant dentists. It's all about sharing education, knowledge and supporting each other to become the best we can be within this great field of dental implantology.

DR. HOCHBERG: On behalf of the AAID and all its members, I want to wish you the very best. I know that our Academy is in excellent shape with you at the helm. ▀