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THE DENTAL INTERNESHIP IN A HOSPITAL

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THE dental state boards do not require an internship, consequently very few men are eager to take this extra year of training. It is the general concensus of opinion that it is just a year lost. This is contrary to fact. In my opinion, it is the most valuable year of one's training. You are brought face to face with many of the problems which you are to encounter in your private practice. The efficiency with which you handle your patients and their problems will determine largely, the extent of your success. In a hospital, you are brought into contact with all types of individuals, and, through repetition, you are able to learn their traits and to handle them accordingly.

When a student finishes school, he is a novice in dental practice. He has been, heretofore, under the guidance of experienced practitioners, who are able to take him out of his difficulties when they arise. The aid which the student receives has a tendency to cause him to look for assistance. When he is in difficulty, for this reason, he does not develop implicit confidence in himself, a thing which is very necessary in the practice of Dentistry. One cannot expect his patients to have confidence in him if he has none in himself. Naturally, one will gradually develop confidence, but it will be at the expense of his practice. This is true, because it is during the early period of practice that one builds a reputation, and, if he is timid and afraid of difficult cases, his practice suffers. An internship may be called the finishing touch of one's training. Cases are presented, are diagnosed, and treated solely upon the operator's discriminating judgment. In this way confidence is developed in one's self.

A dental interne comes in contact with, and, in some instances, treats such cases as: fractures of the mandible and maxilla, osteomyelitis of the maxillary bones, cellulitis arising from oral infection, stomatitis, hemorrhages, malignancies and the like. With a few exceptions, these cases are seldom treated in a school clinic. The student is given the theory, but not the actual experience of seeing them treated. If the dental interne is industrious and eager for advancement, he may increase his general knowledge of medicine considerably. He is in contact with the medical clinics and conferences, and is associated daily with the medical internes in their discussions. In this way he may absorb many helpful points which will be indispensable to him in his practice.

On the medical wards one comes in contact with chronic conditions, upon which oral surgery is contra-indicated; cases such as advanced tuberculosis, diabetes, nephritis, hemophilia, cardiac disturbances, advanced malignancy, etc. From experience with these cases, one is able to detect most of these conditions and refrain from surgical interference which may result in fatality.

The general anesthetics, with the exception of nitrous oxide, are seldom given in school clinics. In the hospital, the dental interne has the opportunity to see and administer numerous general anesthetics, particularly ether and nitrous oxide. It is most important that he learn to administer nitrous oxide, for a number of his patients will prefer nitrous oxide to a local anesthetic, and, in certain instances, it will be the anesthetic of choice, because of contra-indications for other types of anesthesia.

Thus far the discussion has been only on the advantages of a dental internship. There are also disadvantages that should not be overlooked. The hospital internship affords advancement only in oral surgery. The other phases of dentistry, such as operative dentistry, prosthetic dentistry, crown and bridge and orthodontia are not practiced. The interne has a full year's lay off from the technics mentioned above. If he decided to finish his internship before taking a state board examination, he is handicapped because of the year's inactivity. The procedures seem awkward, consequently he will not do the work of which he is capable.

Considering the "pro's" and "con's" of an internship, in my opinion, the advantages overshadow the disadvantages, particularly if the individual is interested in oral surgery. In closing I would like to add that the young dentists, before accepting internships, should take their state board examinations while they are fresh from clinical procedures and class room work. In other words, take your state board as soon as possible after graduation.

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