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Reply to letter to editor: Efficacy of anti-retraction devices in preventing bacterial contamination of dental unit water lines[☆]

With reference to the letter of Dr Susanna Del Nero, we underline that the aim of our work published in the Journal of Dentistry was finalized both to demonstrate the efficacy of anti-return valves, and the efficiency of any device able to prevent retraction in the dental unit water lines. We were able to prove that 74% of the units tested by us showed retraction (Journal of Dentistry 2003; 2:36-41, Fig. 3) thus indicating a true risk of cross-infection among patients via the sprays being released from of contaminated dental unit water lines.

Moreover, the experimental procedure described in the letter by Dr Susanna Del Nero is not equivalent neither to the mechanical method (developed in accordance with ANSI/ADA standard no. 47), nor to the microbiological protocol that we employed for the evaluation of retraction in dental units.

In order to compare the data obtained in different experimental sets, the tests must be performed using the same protocol and procedure. So, we will be grateful to CEFLA Dentale if it would place a dental unit at our disposal in order to carry out mechanical and microbiological tests both before (i.e. a new dental unit) and after six months of controlled use in dental setting.

Finally, we wish to congratulate CEFLA Dentale for declaring to have installed disinfection systems on their own-production units. Said declaration backs up our hypothesis of a cross-infection risk in dentistry by medical devices, and of a need to furnish dental units with systems guaranteeing disinfection of the water lines.

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