today SHOW PREVIEW

41st International Dental Show • Cologne • 25–29 March 2025


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Cologne calling

Dental world prepares for the leading dental business summit.

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■ From 25 to 29 March, the International Dental Show (IDS) will hold its 41st edition, underscoring its position as the world's leading trade fair for dentistry and dental technology. Organised by the Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Dental-Industrie and staged by Koelnmesse, IDS serves as a vital hub for key participants in the dental industry. The event brings together a diverse range of participants, offering a unique platform for innovation, networking and knowledge exchange. It has consistently set the benchmark for the dental industry, earning international renown for its scope and significance.

More than just products

IDS continues to evolve beyond being a product showcase, positioning itself as an integrative network that addresses central industry challenges. Key themes this year will include the promotion of young talent, addressing of the shortage of skilled labour, implementation of clinical sustainability and integration of artificial intelligence into the dental industry. The trade fair will offer an expanded range of activities and formats to support networking, knowledge transfer and innovative collaboration. Notable additions to the event include the digital platform IDSconnect, which will provide an online extension of the fair through seminars, corporate presentations and learning sessions. This combination of physical and digital content ensures that IDS remains a forward-thinking event that adapts to the changing needs of the dental community.

New opportunities for remote engagement

IDSconnect, which is available since March, provides attendees with opportunities to engage digitally before, during and after the event. This platform allows visitors to explore a variety of educational resources, network with peers and exhibitors, and prepare for their time at the fair. The online services will complement the in-person experience, offering a comprehensive approach to professional development and industry insights. The digital transformation of the event reflects IDS's commitment to combining analogue and digital formats to cater for a wide range of participant needs.

Easy access, mobility and comfort

In addition to the extensive exhibition space, which will span 180,000 m^2, IDS 2025 will offer a more flexible and user-friendly experience for visitors. An optimised hall layout with multiple entrances will streamline access, and personalised tickets will enhance visitor convenience. The tickets, which can be managed via the official IDS app or stored digitally in a smartphone wallet, offer added benefits, such as valid public transport access for the local VRS/VRR network, as well as exclusive travel deals from the national rail network Deutsche Bahn and national airline Lufthansa. Hotel accommodation can also be booked through the event's online portal, providing a seamless experience for attendees. The ticketing system for IDS 2025 has been revamped to allow for greater flexibility. Visitors can purchase their tickets online at the ticket shop.

IDS 2025: A pivotal industry milestone

With its longstanding tradition and its significant role in shaping the future of the dental industry, IDS remains an essential event. The 2025 edition promises to be a comprehensive platform for the global dental community, providing ample opportunities for business, innovation and professional development. The strong international presence, along with a robust focus on current industry trends and future challenges, makes IDS a must-attend event for anyone involved in the dental industry. Whether through its physical exhibition, digital tools or networking opportunities, IDS continues to be the central meeting point for dental professionals, manufacturers and innovators, setting the stage for the next era in dental technology and industry advancement.

More information about IDS can be found at www.ids-cologne.de.


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News from the European press meeting

Industry leaders gather in Cologne ahead of IDS 2025.

■ In January, over 50 representatives from the dental media and industry gathered at Koelnmesse for its European press meeting ahead of IDS 2025. The conference provided insights into the dental market, discussed upcoming trends and previewed highlights of this year's event.

Market insights and growth drivers

Market analyst Dr Bernd Rebmann, CEO of Rebmann Research, presented findings from the newest edition of *ATLAS DENTAL Europe*, a 250-page report prepared for the 41st IDS. Drawing on data from 500 sources, the report analyses 11 European and overseas markets, including the US, Brazil, Japan and Egypt.

Dr Rebmann outlined key global growth drivers in the dental industry, including demographic changes, heightened awareness of oral health, increasing demand for aesthetic treatments and the rise of dental support organisations. He also outlined key trends that are shaping the dental industry in Europe. Dental practices are increasingly adopting digital technologies and focusing on minimally invasive, patient-centred care, driven by demographic shifts such as ageing populations and the greater need for dental care among older patients. Dental laboratories are benefiting from digital workflows that enhance efficiency, though competition from chairside restorations is rising. Manufacturers are facing challenges regarding trade barriers and regulatory requirements, emphasising the need for integrated solutions and global expansion. All of these topics are relevant to the future of the industry and will play a significant role at the upcoming IDS.

> *"We are now in year one of the second century of IDS."*
>
> ***Mark Stephen Pace, chairman of the Association of the German Dental Industry***

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Fig. 1: From left: Oliver Frese chief operating officer of Koelnmesse; Mark Stephen Pace, chairman of the Association of the German Dental Industry; Dr Freddie Sloth-Lisbjerg, president Council of European Dentists; and Dr Bernd Rebmann, CEO of Rebmann Research. – **Fig. 2:** Dr Freddie Sloth-Lisbjerg (centre) highlighted that the European dental sector is shifting towards larger practices, specialisation and teamwork, but workforce challenges must be addressed. – **Fig. 3:** In his speech, Mark Stephen Pace emphasised the importance of showcasing innovation, service and reliability at IDS to position the industry as a strong partner for global trade visitors. – **Fig. 4:** Dr Bernd Rebmann presented insights from *ATLAS DENTAL Europe*, highlighting global dental industry growth drivers. – **Fig. 5:** The press conference took place at Koelnmesse on 22 January. – **Fig. 6:** Journalists and key figures of the dental industry were eager to learn about market insights and emerging trends.

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today will appear in advance of the 41st International Dental Show in Cologne, which will take place 25–29 March 2025.

Preview of IDS 2025

Oliver Frese, chief operating officer of IDS organiser Koelnmesse, confirmed that IDS 2025 is set to host approximately 2,000 exhibitors from 60 countries, 77% of whom are from abroad. Countries like South Korea, Italy, the US, China, Turkey, Spain, France and Switzerland will be among the most prominently represented. "The fair has grown significantly since its centenary in 2023, and registration numbers are already exceeding last year's figures," he said. IDS 2025 aims to surpass the success of the 2023 edition, which welcomed around 120,000 trade visitors from 122 countries. This year's event will span seven halls and cover 180,000 m^2.

Mark Stephen Pace, chairman of the Association of the German Dental Industry, which is involved in organising the event, expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming event. "This will be the first IDS after our 100th anniversary in 2023. We are now in year one of the second century of IDS. Despite changing conditions, we remain a constant in the industry," he stated.

"IDS will once again be the indispensable global marketplace for the dental industry. As the most comprehensive showcase of innovations in dental medicine and technology, it presents the entire global dental market in an environment of fair competition among suppliers. We can already assume today that, in its role as a trendsetter and pacesetter, IDS will once again boost the global dental industry," Pace concluded.

Innovations and opportunities

The press meeting highlighted cutting-edge innovations expected at IDS, particularly in diagnostics, digital imaging and CAD/CAM devices. Reflecting its robust market growth and increasing significance in the industry, the Asia-Pacific region is expected to be widely represented, and the number of exhibitors from the region is increasing. Although companies are keeping product details under wraps, attendees can be sure of seeing the best and the newest in dental technology at the show.

Tickets for IDS 2025 have been available since November 2024. To attract younger dental professionals, dental students and trainees will be given free entry on 29 March. ◂◂

"IDS stands out as a guiding star"

VDDI's Mark Stephen Pace gives an outlook on the 41st IDS. By Christian Ehrensberger, Germany.

■ During the European press meeting, traditionally held in the January ahead of IDS, the significance of the event for the dental market was discussed. In this regard, a number of presenters spoke on the opportunities presented by the dental market and dental practice, and in this interview, Mark Stephen Pace, chairman of the Association of the German Dental Industry, comments on their views and shares some insights on what visitors should pay special attention to at this year's IDS.

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Mr Pace, based on Dr Bernd Rebmann's presentation at the European press meeting, how do you assess the future of dentistry, and what conclusions can be drawn for market participants?

Dr Rebmann highlighted the vast global market for dental services and its tremendous growth potential. According to his findings, the market is expected to double over the next seven years—reaching over US$800 billion (€769.9 billion*) by 2032.

In recent years, we've grown accustomed to navigating from one crisis to another without knowing what tomorrow may bring. Yet, the opportunities in the dental market remain immense. In this dynamic environment, IDS stands out as a guiding star, offering direction and clarity. That's why, like many others, I'm eagerly looking forward to the show!

During the press conference, Dr Freddie Sloth-Lisbjerg, president of the Council of European Dentists, described the US as the global leader in innovation, China as the leader in production and Europe as the leader in regulation. What is your opinion on this?

It's an interesting observation. The EU medical device regulations have certainly affected the European dental industry. Less bureaucracy and more room for innovation would benefit us all. Fortunately, potential exemptions for niche and legacy products from certain conformity assessment processes offer hope. Despite regulatory headwinds, the European dental industry continues to demonstrate remarkable innovation.

Prof. Christoph Benz, president of the German Dental Association, stated that running a dental practice remains one of the best start-up opportunities. Do you agree?

Absolutely! By providing individualised, patient-centred care and exceptional service, dentists can position themselves for success. The same applies to dental technicians. Although competition in the dental laboratory business is intensifying, differentiation and specialisation present significant opportunities.

If you had one key piece of advice for young professionals, what would it be?

If you are a young dentist, a dental assistant in training or an apprentice dental technician considering starting your own practice or laboratory—or simply exploring your career options—be sure to visit IDS on 29 March. Admission will be free of charge for dental students and trainees on that day.

What should visitors be sure not to miss at IDS 2025?

IDS offers a comprehensive showcase of everything needed for dental practices and laboratories and has a strong focus on digitalisation. For example, in caries diagnostics, integrated imaging technologies, such as radiography, fluorescence and transillumination, provide faster and more comprehensive assessments. With artificial intelligence-assisted radiographic analysis, dentists can identify early-stage caries more accurately. MRI is emerging as a valuable tool for detecting secondary and hidden caries.

In periodontal diagnostics, MRI technology also enables early detection of bone loss. Combined with intraoral scans, 3D radiography and CT imaging, MRI supports more-precise backward planning for implants.

In endodontics, digital assistance systems reduce the risk of file breakage. Sensorless motors react instantly, and continuous electronic length measurement during root canal preparation supports precise results.

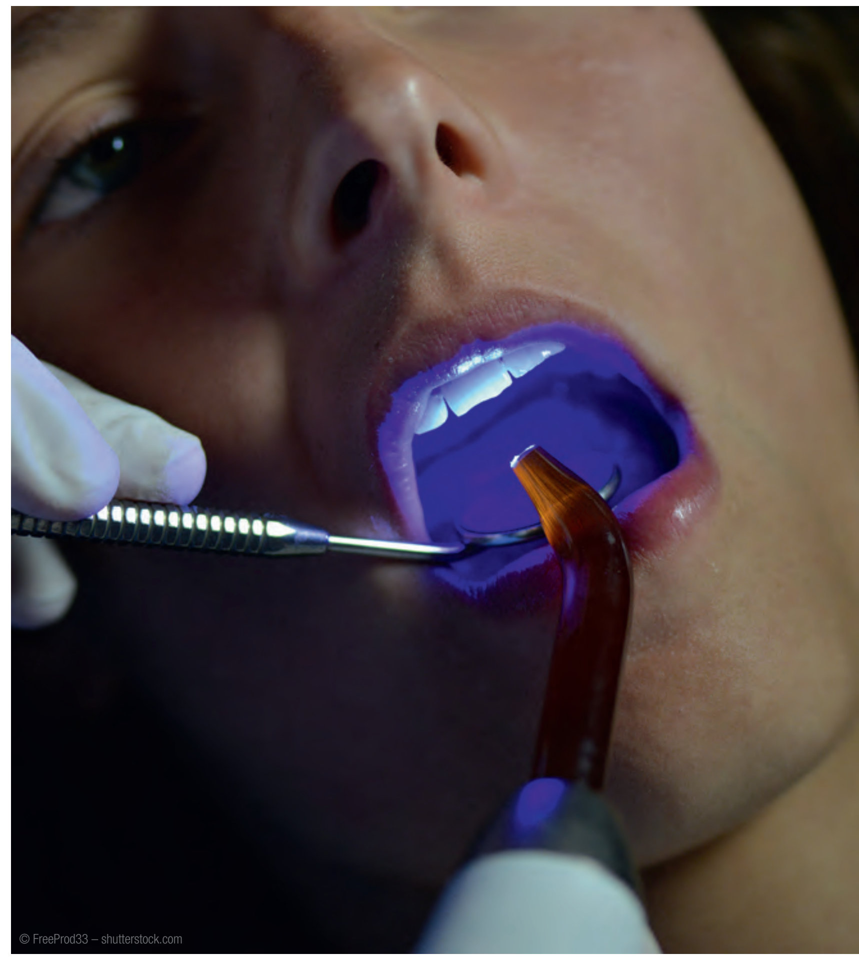
In dental laboratory preparation, plug-and-play design software keeps costs manageable, enabling even beginners to fabricate complex restorations. Additive manufacturing expands prosthetic possibilities, facilitating intricate designs such as undercuts and retentions. High-viscosity, ceramic-filled resin composites can now be processed using vacuum-sealed capsules. In addition to metals and plastics, 3D printing with zirconia is already a reality. Subperiosteal implants, for example, have been successfully produced using zirconia-based additive manufacturing. Cloud computing streamlines communication and case management between practices and laboratories, enabling flexible and efficient workflows. IDS visitors can expect to see all of these technologies on show.

Beyond innovations and new technologies, what is most important to you at IDS?

For me, IDS is above all about networking, engaging in professional and personal exchanges with like-minded individuals. Products may be interchangeable, but people are not. ◂◂

* *Calculated on the OANDA platform for 22 January 2025.*

EU health report outlines dental market challenges



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■ A new report on the state of healthcare in the EU has found that workforce shortages and an ageing population are contributing to a "shifting balance" between the demand and supply of health services on the continent. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and European Commission, the report underscores significant inequities in dental care access across EU countries, shaped by factors such as income inequality and public insurance coverage. The findings call for a balanced focus on equitable funding, strategic dentist distribution and preventive care initiatives.

The report, *Health at a Glance: Europe 2024*, that examines the major challenges facing European health systems in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, found that the number of dentists varies widely across EU countries, ranging from 0.5 to 1.3 dentists per 1,000 inhabitants. Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania had the highest per capita numbers, although figures for Greece and Portugal may be inflated, as they include all licensed dentists (i.e. also those who have retired or emigrated, for example). Across the EU, dentist availability was found to have grown modestly, from 0.7 in 2010 to 0.8 in 2022, except in Denmark, where a decline was observed.

EU residents averaged 1.2 dental visits annually in 2022, the number of consultations varying significantly, from 0.3 in Romania to 3.3 in the Netherlands. The low utilisation in Romania, despite high dentist availability, reflects limited public funding and high out-of-pocket costs, pushing many residents to forgo oral care. Public funding accounts for just 7% of dental spending in Romania, compared with 65% in France and Germany. Conversely, the Netherlands, despite dental care not being comprehensively covered for adults, achieved a high consultation rate owing to prevention-focused education programmes, such as the nationally acclaimed "Hou je mond gezond!" initiative, which fosters early awareness and routine care in children. Croatia was also observed to exemplify effective early oral health promotion, highlighting the role of systemic efforts in improving dental health outcomes.

Despite dental health being a critical component of overall well-being, the report found that 6% of individuals needing dental care in 2023 reported unmet needs, rising to over 12% among populations at risk of poverty. Furthermore, unmet needs for dental care were found to be greater than those for medical care, owing to dental fees being excluded or only partially covered by public health schemes. "In 2023, more than 8% of people in Greece, Latvia, Portugal and Denmark reported unmet needs for dental care for reasons related to the organisation and functioning of healthcare services, mainly for financial reasons," the report authors wrote.

"Europe finds itself at a pivotal moment in the evolution of health systems across the continent," the authors said, adding that the health landscape is undergoing rapid change. Ageing populations, declining birth rates and workforce shortages are straining European health and long-term care services. At the same time, technological advances, such as artificial intelligence and digital health tools, are offering promise but raising equity concerns. The report points out that climate change is exacerbating health risks and resulting in a more urgent need for resilient and sustainable healthcare delivery. ◂◂

Global perspectives on oral health

Collaborative efforts to tackle a global challenge. By Iveta Ramonaite, Dental Tribune International.

■ Although oral health is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of overall health, significant disparities in access to care and preventive measures persist. In response, global efforts to address these challenges have gained momentum, and organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), FDI World Dental Federation and the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) are leading the charge. This article gives an overview of international initiatives and collaborative policies aimed at combating oral disease.

Oral disease affects nearly half of the world's population, and research indicates that the burden is disproportionately higher in low- and middle-income countries, where preventive dental services are often inaccessible. In Lebanon, for instance, this is exacerbated by a combination of financial constraints, political instability and lack of public awareness about the importance of regular dental visits and the role of oral health in overall well-being. Moreover, conflicts and natural disasters have displaced a significant number of people, many of whom are refugees fleeing developing countries, and they face numerous health challenges, including untreated dental caries, periodontal disease, oral infections and trauma.

Turning the tide: Advocacy and policy

In recent years, significant progress has been made in elevating oral health as a global public health priority. Greater awareness of the systemic links between oral and general health, research into the economic burden of oral disease and educational campaigns promoting oral hygiene have all contributed to this progress. Innovations such as artificial intelligence, teledentistry, mobile clinics and minimally invasive treatments have further improved accessibility and care delivery, drawing increased attention to oral health.

A defining milestone was reached in 2021 when WHO member states adopted the resolution on oral health. Speaking to Dental Tribune International (DTI), Dr Benoit Varenne, a dental officer with WHO's oral health programme, commented: "The resolution emphasises that the prevention and control of oral disease should be firmly integrated into non-communicable disease programmes and universal health coverage initiatives." Building on this, WHO launched its *Global Strategy on Oral Health* in 2022 and its *Global Strategy and Action Plan on Oral Health 2023–2030*, which aligns closely with FDI's *Vision 2030*. These initiatives set ambitious goals for reducing oral disease, addressing oral health inequities and promoting prevention.

> *"We are at a critical stage in the global response to oral health."*
>
> *FDI president Dr Greg Chadwick*

FDI President Dr Greg Chadwick highlighted the growing momentum around oral health in his remarks to DTI: "We are at a critical stage in the global response to oral health. Decades of advocacy efforts led by multiple stakeholders, including FDI, are paying off, and governments, with support from WHO, are paying unprecedented attention to oral disease."

Additionally, dental organisations continue to play a leading role in advancing best practices in periodontics and implant dentistry. For example, the EFP has developed S3-level clinical practice guidelines for treating periodontitis and peri-implant disease, and additional guidelines on gingival disease and mucogingival surgery are anticipated by 2026. Beyond clinical practice, the EFP has also influenced health policy through collaborations such as its work with global insights and advocacy platform Economist Impact. Their white paper *Time to put your money, where your mouth is: Addressing inequalities in oral health* advocates for increased investment in preventive oral health measures.

FDI president Dr Greg Chadwick says that global efforts to improve oral health are gaining momentum.

For EFP president Prof. Moritz Kebschull, the most important priority is that global oral health strategies focus on reducing disparities in access to care and prioritising prevention.

Challenges and the road ahead

Despite these advancements, significant challenges remain. Oral disease continues to impose a greater burden than many other common health conditions, and access to care remains uneven across countries and healthcare systems. Many nations face shortages of dental professionals, insufficient infrastructure and low public awareness of the importance of oral hygiene. Additionally, the high cost of dental treatment remains a significant barrier, particularly in underserved communities.

"Addressing disparities in access to oral healthcare across different countries and healthcare systems and promoting prevention as a primary anchor should be central to global oral health strategies," Prof. Moritz Kebschull, president of the EFP, shared in a conversation with DTI. He continued: "Dental professionals must continue to advocate for comprehensive oral health education in order to ensure that it becomes a core element of general health awareness."

> *"Dental professionals must continue to advocate for comprehensive oral health education."*
>
> *EFP president Prof. Moritz Kebschull*

Although the state of global oral health reflects persistent disparities, collaborative efforts by organisations such as WHO, FDI and the EFP have laid a strong foundation for progress. Cooperation among governments, non-governmental organisations, academia and the private sector is crucial to tackling oral health challenges and fostering innovation. It can help promote oral health as an integral part of overall health and support research, education and public awareness.

To overcome the challenges ahead, it is essential to integrate oral health services into primary care, strengthen healthcare systems and promote public health interventions. Partnerships between governments, international organisations and civil society will be critical in reducing the global burden of oral disease and achieving universal oral health coverage by 2030. Additionally, professional events can contribute meaningfully. IDS 2025 will provide a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration, further advancing global oral health, as will upcoming events such as EuroPerio11 in May and the 2025 FDI World Dental Congress in September.

DSOs increase their reach

Global growth, new technologies and evolving models expand the influence of dental support organisations. By Jeremy Booth, Dental Tribune International.

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■ The dental support organisation (DSO) model has undergone significant transformation over the past few decades, reshaping the global dental care landscape. By consolidating single clinics into large-scale networks, DSOs have grown in prominence, offering economies of scale and increased access to new dental technologies. The evolution of DSOs has been shaped by regional differences in market dynamics, regulatory frameworks and patient needs, and dentists are making their own mark on practice consolidation by adapting merger strategies to their own needs. As they grow in size and purchasing power, DSOs continue to attract due attention.

Historical development

DSOs first emerged in the US during the late 1980s, driven by a growing demand for accessible, cost-effective dental care. Initially, they focused on supporting administrative functions, allowing dentists to concentrate on clinical care. As DSOs matured, they expanded to include clinical oversight, training, the integration of advanced technology and the combination of dental specialties.

Europe followed a different trajectory, many DSOs forming after 2000 in response to investor interest and changing patient expectations. The UK and Germany, for example, witnessed significant consolidation, led by private equity. In contrast, DSOs in Asia-Pacific have developed more recently and at varying rates, and key growth markets in the region include Australia and China.

Regional comparisons

The US is the largest and most mature DSO market, led by Heartland Dental, which has over 1,750 locations across 39 states. CEO Pat Bauer described the first half of 2024 as "a remarkable period of growth and innovation" for the company. Heartland Dental opened 55 cutting-edge clinics in the first half of 2024 alone. Factors such as a fragmented healthcare system and rising treatment costs have enabled DSOs like Heartland to thrive by offering cost-efficiency and greater access to care. Regulatory oversight focuses on state licensing boards, and DSOs must navigate a complex web of compliance requirements.

European DSOs are smaller than their US counterparts and operate under stricter regulatory environments, including being subject to tougher anti-trust laws and the bloc's General Data Protection Regulation, which heavily influences data management, patient privacy and record-keeping. European patients value personalised oral care more than those in the US do; however, this cultural preference has not stemmed the growth of European DSOs. Over a period of 17 years, the UK's mydentist has gone from three clinics in North West England to a UK-wide network of over 550 practices. Founded in 2015 after a legal change made it easier to network dental clinics, Germany's Zahneins now has 80 dental practices spread across the country's western and southern states. Pan-European dental conglomerates have also emerged, such as the European Dental Group, which has amassed over 300 clinics in six European countries since 2007. Toby Anderson, CEO at European Dental Group, told Dental Tribune International that the DSO continues to attract and retain dentists and invest in the latest technologies. "Clinicians are attracted to our model, because we enable them to really focus on treating the patient and improving the quality of care," Anderson said.

Consisting of established and developing dental markets, the Asia-Pacific region has a growing DSO presence. Regulatory frameworks vary widely, and highly regulated markets like Japan and South Korea are characterised by independently operated clinics. In other Asia-Pacific markets, DSOs are gaining a foothold, owing to a growing middle class and supportive government policies. Australia's Abano Healthcare has a network of over 250 locations in Australasia, operating under the brands Lumino The Dentists, Maven Dental and 1300SMILES Dentists. In China, Arrail Group has grown to 123 locations, boosted by a campaign targeting small and medium-sized clinics in second-tier cities and promising the latest dental technologies.

In Latin America, Brazil and Mexico have accounted for the largest surge in DSO activity. DSOs here focus on affordability and access, often targeting underserved rural areas and operating under less stringent regulatory oversight. This year, Brazil's Sorridents reached the milestone of 500 clinics.

Developing new models offers greater autonomy

Recent trends in DSO-driven consolidation reflect changes in the dental workforce and a growing emphasis on technology-driven practices. In developed dental markets, younger dentists face greater cost barriers to practice ownership than previous generations of clinicians did, and a focus on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and digital workflows into daily operations is helping to attract new graduates to the DSO model. According to the American Dental Association (ADA), dentists with less than ten years of clinical experience are more likely to be affiliated with a DSO. In 2022, 13% of US dentists were affiliated with a dental group, up from 10.4% in 2019 and 8.8% in 2017. "Practice modality continues to change," commented Dr Marko Vujicic, chief economist and vice president of the ADA Health Policy Institute. "Our updated data show higher rates of dentist affiliation with DSOs as well as less dentists in solo practice and more in groups," he added.

In addition to technological resources, joining a DSO offers dentists reduced administrative burdens, allowing them to focus more on patient care and less on business management. However, clinicians are increasingly opting to set their own consolidation terms.

Being backed by private equity funds, DSOs offer clinicians greater financial flexibility than banks do, including through strategic transition models such as joint ventures or practice roll-ups. According to Kyle Francis of US-based dental mergers and acquisitions specialist Professional Transition Strategies, the concept of dental roll-ups has gained in popularity and created advantages for owner dentists. In an interview with Dental Tribune International, Francis commented that roll-ups appeal to clinicians seeking mentorship, work–life balance and operational support and wishing to avoid the financial risks of running a private practice. He said that the model does not require an overarching legal entity or management structure and that its advantages include increasing the value of individual clinics. He explained: "[Multiple] dental practices are aggregated and brought to market at the same time to maximise the scale of the earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation that is being bought."

In Europe, DSOs are increasingly adopting a hybrid model, combining centralised administrative functions with a focus on local, personalised patient care. Emerging markets in the Asia-Pacific and Latin America regions have become key targets for expansion, as rising incomes and demand for quality dental care fuel growth. In these regions, DSOs are exploring innovative partnership models and collaborating with local providers and universities to enhance service offerings.

An increasing number of clinicians are opting to join a dental partnership organisation (DPO) instead of a DSO because this allows them to retain a higher level of clinical autonomy. Like DSOs, DPOs offer administrative support and increased buying power, and although both models appeal to the entrepreneurial spirit, the key differences lie in ownership and financial structuring. DPO members are typically co-owners of their clinics. Profits are shared between members and the DPO, often via tailored equity arrangements. Members aim to secure long-term equity growth, typically by continuing to invest in the DPO as the group gains new practices.

DSOs and the dental industry

Bringing economies of scale, DSOs are big business for dental manufacturers, and they are increasingly being offered customised support. In 2024, Straumann Group launched a DSO brand consisting of solutions and services that DSOs can customise and scale to their needs. The service is backed by dedicated support teams and aims to enhance the growth of existing and emerging DSOs in the Europe, Middle East and Africa, North America and Asia-Pacific regions. Straumann CEO Guillaume Daniellot said that the company had "recognised the importance of distinguishing our service to this target group".

In January, Dentsply Sirona responded to the growing digital needs of DSOs by expanding its DS Core software to include DS Core Enterprise, a cloud-based platform specifically for dental groups. Bruce Peatey, group vice president for the Americas at Dentsply Sirona, explained: "For a DSO, visibility of equipment status, workflow performance analytics and a scalable infrastructure are key factors when growing their business and network."

Challenges and opportunities

As DSOs continue to grow, they face several challenges. Regional variations in licensing, privacy regulations and cultural perceptions of dental care require tailored approaches. Additionally, public perception can vary. Some patients view DSOs as offering impersonal, corporate care.

However, the opportunities are vast. The evolution of DSOs highlights the adaptability of the model to different regulatory and cultural environments. Technological integration, such as AI-powered diagnostics and cloud-based management systems, enables DSOs to enhance service delivery and improve patient outcomes. Expansion into emerging markets, where access to dental care remains limited, provides avenues for growth.

Besides delivering oral care to millions of patients around the world, with their powerful private equity backing, DSOs may shape the dental industry in yet unforeseen ways. Private equity fund and DSO owner KKR recently gained a 12% share in dental distributor Henry Schein, as well as two seats on its board of directors. This is a clear demonstration of the increasing reach of dental conglomerates. ◂◂

IDS 2025

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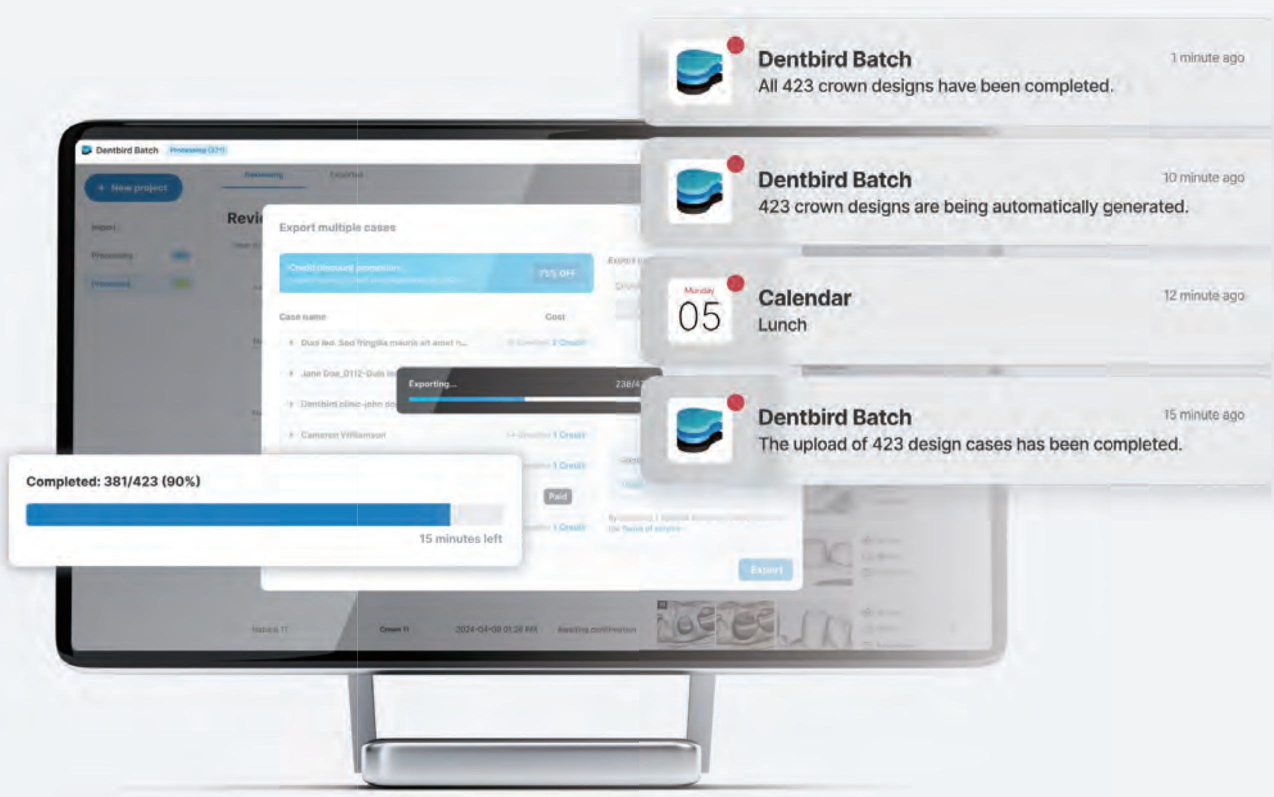

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