

CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITY

Case study:

You are reviewing the patient's health history form and notice the patient is a heavy smoker and consume soft drinks every day. When the patient opens his mouth, you notice there are brown stains located on his anterior lingual surfaces. You finish your assessment and notice that the patient has generalized recession. The patient tells you that he takes good care of his teeth and uses a hard bristle toothbrush to clean his teeth twice a day. For each time, he brushes very hard for 5 minutes, but he still can't get rid of the stain. When you check the patient's most recent x-ray, you notice there are 33 crowns but only 32 roots.

1. What could be the cause of the stain? Can you remove them by using instruments?

Answer: The reason may relate to the patient's smoking habit. Those stains can be removed by instruments because it's extrinsic stains.

2. What will you say to the patient's brushing habit?

Answer: I will tell the patient that it is great that he wants to take good care of his teeth. However, brushing aggressively using a hard bristle toothbrush on teeth is not a good habit. Especially, there is a generalized recession of his gum. He may brush away the root and cause abrasion.

3. Why the number of the crown doesn't match with the number of the tooth.

Answer: it seems there is an "extra" tooth; however, as the number of roots is only 32, there is just an "extra" crown. Thus, maybe one of the teeth presents with gemination.

4. What are your suggestions for this patient-related brushing?

Answer: I will suggest the patient use a soft bristle toothbrush at home, twice a day. He only needs to brush around 2 minutes per time. The stain can be removed by the dental hygienist; thus, he should visit the dental office every 6 months (or sooner). It will be better if he can smoke less daily and quit smoking in the future.