

University launches new dental registry, DNA repository

By John Hoffman, News Editor, Dental Tribune

Dental Tribune news editor John Hoffman talks to Dr. Alexandre R. Vieira, DDS, MS, Ph.D., assistant professor, department of oral biology at the Center for Craniofacial and Dental Genetics at the University of Pittsburgh's school of dental medicine, concerning the university's dental registry and DNA repository.

IT: What is your new dental registry and DNA repository? Please explain how it works.

VIEIRA: Projects that combine a careful clinical description and the application of sophisticated human genetics tools are promising to shed light onto the etiology of complex dental traits. With that in mind, we created the Dental Registry and DNA Repository. The project consists of a two-stage



Dr. Alexandre R. Vieira

process. First, patients seeking dental treatment at our school of dental medi-

cine are invited to provide a saliva sample (from which DNA can be extracted) and are asked to give permission to collect information from their dental and medical records.

The second stage of the project is where this DNA bank can be used as a vast resource for investigators to pursue individual research initiatives in the future. Such investigators will not need to seek their own Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for

dealing with human subject research, as they will be under the blanket IRB approval of the Dental Registry and DNA Repository.

IT: How far along is this? What are you working on?

VIEIRA: We started patient recruitment in September in a specific area of the school of dental medicine (a module clinic with 20 chairs). At this moment, we are initiating the expansion of our recruitment to other clinics. The expectation is that, in the near future, subject recruitment will be happening in the entire dental school, which has more than 250 clinical chairs.

IT: What will the registry and repository bring to dentistry? What do practicing dentists need to know?

VIEIRA: The etiology for a number of clinical dental phenotypes is yet to be fully understood. Many of those have a strong genetic basis and our project will create a unique resource that will allow investigations addressing these issues. We hope that many of these future findings can impact the current dental care that is provided by practicing dentists.

IT: What training are you offering to students? Please outline your program.

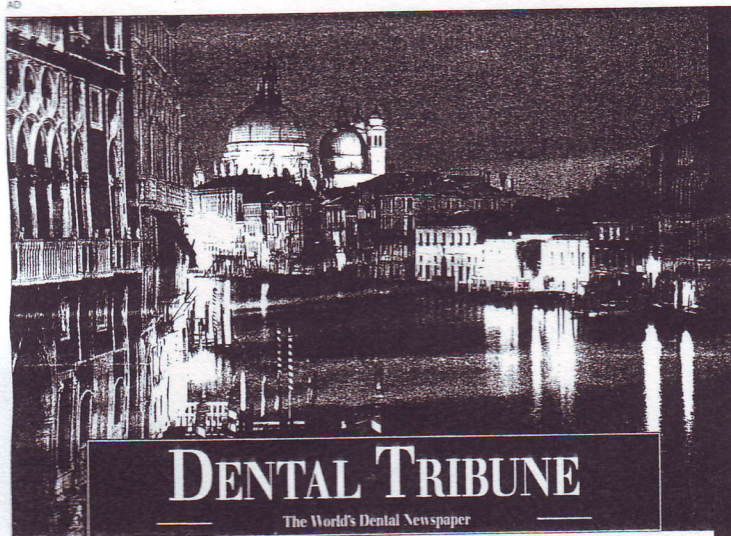
VIEIRA: Currently, we have two undergraduate students involved with the project. They are trained on research ethics, issues of confidentiality and IRB procedure and policies. Also, they are trained in clinical and laboratory safety, as well as being exposed to various steps of research design.

IT: Any grants or partnerships?

VIEIRA: At the moment, this project relies on the sole support of the school of dental medicine. However, we are working in future partnerships with the medical school and have applied for grants offered by the University of Pittsburgh, as well as with the NIH.

IT: Anything further?

VIEIRA: That is the first project of this kind in the world. **IT**



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