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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE VERSATILE CHEEK RETRACTOR

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ABSTRACT

The cheek retractor is an indispensable aid in the field of orthodontics. It is of great importance for moisture control as well as for the provision of a clear field of view during intraoral photography. In this report, we present an innovative technique to modify the cheek retractor for simultaneous use of suction and high volume evacuation during the bonding procedure. Moreover, the use of the same cheek retractor for photographic purposes has been made possible with this modification. This modification leads to better patient comfort and minimal inventory.

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INTRODUCTION

The cheek retractor (Fig.1) is an essential clinical aid in the practice of orthodontics. It is of paramount importance in the moisture control armamentarium of a dental practitioner. It also provides good visual field during intra-oral photography, which is an important part of record maintenance and documentation. The simultaneous use of a cheek retractor along with high volume evacuation becomes necessary in certain moisture-sensitive tasks such as bracket bonding. This normally calls for chairside assistance. To avoid this, a modified cheek retractor was described in a previous article entitled "Modification of a cheek retractor for high volume evacuation" published in Pearls (JCO Oct 2009). Since the wire components were attached to the cheek retractor using chemically cured bisGMA resin, they could not be removed and hence prevented the use of the same cheek retractors for photographic purposes. We suggest a simple modification to overcome this disadvantage.

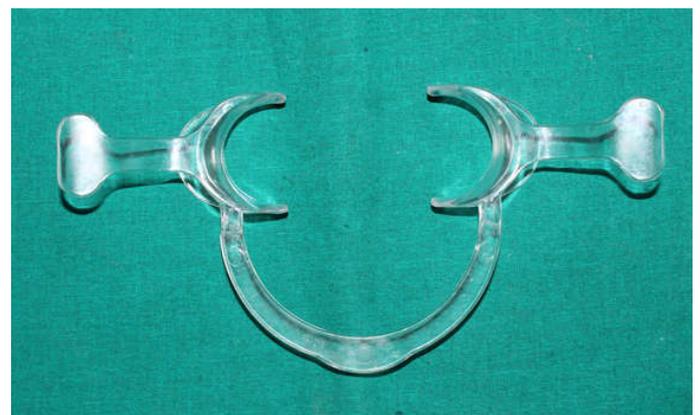


Figure 1. Commercially available cheek retractor

Technique

- Two holes are made in each of the handles of the retractor using a bur (Fig.2).
- Through these holes, two .036" palatal sheaths with their ends bent perpendicular using a universal plier are fixed on the retractor handles using chemically cured bisGMA resin (Fig.3).

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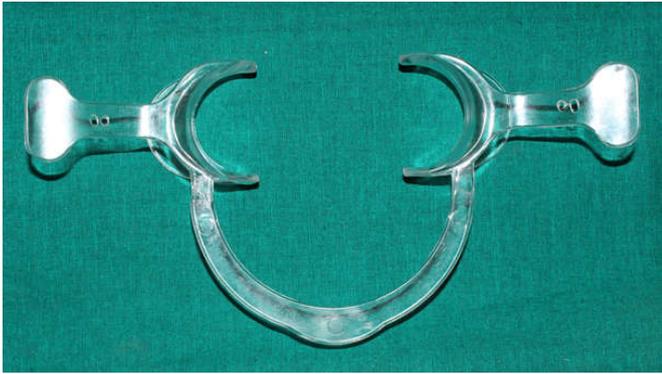


Figure 2. Two holes made in each of the wings of the cheek retractor

- Two segments of .036" stainless steel wire are bent such that each of the segments has a 10-12 mm helix at one end and a double-back at the other end (fig.4).
- The wire segments are attached to the retractor by placing the double-back through the palatal sheaths (Fig.5).
- This modified cheek retractor can be used in conjunction with high volume evacuation and suction (Fig.6) to ensure a moisture-free field during bonding.



Figure 3. Palatal sheaths fixed on the cheek retractor using chemically cured bisGMA resin



Figure 4. Wire segments bent with a helix and a double back



Figure 5. Wire segments attached to the cheek retractor by placing the double back through the palatal sheath



Figure 6. The versatile cheek retractor in use

Conclusion

Due to the removable nature of these wire segments, the same cheek retractor used during bonding can be used for photographic purposes after the removal of the wire segments. This will lead to better patient comfort and minimal inventory.

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