

Warning: '80% of dentists should be avoided'

Dentists are ripping off patients in Australia and overseas, doing inadequate work and at least 80 per cent should be avoided, according to dental technician Werner Sauer.

Mr Sauer, who runs Werner Sauer Oral Design in Brisbane, said many Australian dental technicians would not recommend 80% of dentists to customers, family or friends and some would be even more selective.

Having worked in the industry for 43 years, he regularly sees first hand the lack of quality and care taken by many dentists worldwide.

Mr Sauer said patients needed to be informed about their dental treatment, especially cosmetic procedures.

"If teeth are not functioning properly, it could lead to neuromuscular problems such as migraines, neck and jaw pain," Mr Sauer said.

"With an oversupply of dentists and people travelling overseas for treatment, dentists are under more pressure to cut costs. This has been compounded by corporations and health funds buying up dental practices and pushing their employed dentists to produce more work for lower costs and KPIs."

He said young dentists were no longer mentored by their employers, as had previously happened in traditional family practices and were not receiving adequate on-the-job training.

"The focus is on profits, not patient care," he said.

"Almost 70 per cent of dental lab work is going offshore and the savings are not passed on to the patient. Some dentists are buying dental crowns in China for about \$50 and selling them fitted to patients for up to \$2100."

He said the local cost of a crown was about \$250 to \$400, yet regardless of where the dentist bought it from, they still charged ridiculous prices and 'pocketed the difference'.

"Patients are not told where their crowns are being made or offered the choice or the saving. In Germany, there is full disclosure legally by dentists," Mr Sauer said.

"Australian patients should demand the same level of transparency."

He said patients were making decisions far too lightly and based too much on price.

"Not recognising the consequences of poor treatment can be much worse in the long term," he said.

"Usually it is more expensive and the treatment more extensive to repair failed dental work than it would have been to have it performed properly in the first place. With dentistry, problems may take years to manifest, so many patients are unaware of the ramifications of inadequate dental work. It's much better to seek treatment from a dentist that you can trust to do the work properly, will not take shortcuts to save costs or treat above their skill level."

Retired Sydney dental technician/ author of 'Open Wide- What Your Dentist Won't Tell You', Tom Parker backed up Mr Sauer's warning, saying he and many other dental technicians would only refer their families to 1-3% of dentists.

He said the biggest problem with going overseas for dental work was there was no continuing service and it would take 2-3 years for problems to show, so the one-year warranty offered by some travel companies was worthless.

"You can get brilliant dentistry in Australia (and overseas) and you can get butchery," Mr Parker said.

Patients need to know how to ask the right questions to find a quality dentist that they can trust with their care. If patients want to be referred to quality dentists and neuromuscular dentists they can trust, call 3368 2283 or visit www.wsod.com.au

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