Now is the time to consider investing in your own CBCT System

By Ernesto Jaconelli

This Century has seen the introduction of 3D imaging as a readily available dental diagnostic tool. This trend has been inspired by the development of both Cone Beam Computed Technology (CBCT) and PC storage capability making 3D imaging more convenient, easier to use, and affordable.

To be able to view the area of interest in all three dimensions significantly improves the accuracy of diagnosis and this in turn makes for better patient treatment. Each year new systems are becoming available such as the new CS 8100 3D System form Carestream Dental. These new systems are now significantly smaller, more versatile and user friendly than their predecessors. The CS 8100 3D has a “resting” width of 33cm (110cm when in use) and weighs only 92Kgm so will fit easily into most compact dental clinics. A very important feature of all modern CBCT systems is that they provide the Dentist with a choice of volumes that will be right for the area of interest. These volumes are known as the Field of View (FOV). The CS 8100 3D for example gives choices from taking a 2D Panoramic to capturing a selection of 3D FOVs of 4 x 4 / 5 x 5 / 8 x 8 and 8 x 9 mm. As with all x-rays it is essential to minimise the dose to the patient - the larger the FOV the more dose to the patient. Each area of dental surgery will require a different FOV depending on the treatment being considered so it is essential to have a choice of FOVs to select from. For a single implant a FOV of 5 x 5 mm will be sufficient and the dose to the patient in this case will be similar to that from a 2D panoramic scan. However for the preparation of multiple implants or surgical guides then a single arch FOV of 8 x 8 / 8 x 9mm FOV would be selected. Dentist who specialising in Implants were the first to fully appreciate the benefits of 3D imaging such that it is now unusual to find one who does not have their own CBCT system. For Endodontists, the key diagnostic tool is always their surgical loupes. But they are also adopting 3D image to reveal more clearly any additional canals that are present and possibly missed from a 2D image as well as their exact position and apical areas. A sectorial FOV of 5 x 5 mm will provide a very high definition image for an Endodontist to be able to examine the area in precise detail. Until now Orthodontists have mainly been satisfied with a 2D panoramic view. However having a CBCT system that switches easily from a 2D panoramic to 3D image allows the Orthodontist to select a 3D view when required. Retention and angulation for example are more precisely diagnosed from an 8 x 5 / 8 x 9 mm FOV.

3D imaging will soon be the norm for dental diagnostics requiring all dentists to be familiar with the technology and capable of analysing 3D images. There has never been a more appropriate time to consider having your own CBCT System. Manufacturers are supplying more in depth training such as at the Carestream Dental Training Centre at Ajman University of Science and Technology, and now that CBCT systems are available from 40,000€, a return on the investment can be achieved within two years.