

My laser learning journey (Part 2)

Dr Jason Pang recounts his game-changing experience with dental lasers in this second instalment of our series featuring pioneering graduates of Laser and Health Academy (LA&HA) Masters in Laser Dentistry program.

By Danny Chan

When Dr Jason Pang decided to change the name of his Neutral Bay practice by adding the word 'laser' - to become Cosmic Smile Laser Dental - he wasn't simply trying to give it a tech spin. Rather, the new name reflected the profound impact that laser tech has had on his practice, following his introduction to the Fotona LightWalker in 2015.

The Sydney-based practitioner first heard about dental lasers in 2009 and was immediately drawn to their ability to treat multiple soft-tissue related problems, from healing inflamed gums and cold sores, lengthening teeth in gummy smiles to treating venous malformations.

For the self-confessed tech geek always on the lookout for new and better ways to do things, that initial brush with dental lasers represented a major discovery preceded by several others: Virtual Reality (VR) products, a CBVT x-ray machine, Minimal Intervention Dentistry, Lumineers and Snap-On Smile.

Dr Pang was one of six contributing authors of Game Changers: Entrepreneurs Leading Change, in which he chronicled his journey from an importer and distributor of VR wares to working as a dentist in his father's surgery to founding his own booming practice. His suburban practice located on the Lower North Shore of Sydney has been featured on Seven Network's Today Tonight and Channel Nine News for his anti-snoring work.

In the Amazon-retailing book, Dr Pang credits his introduction to dental lasers as the major turning point of an outstanding career. Another pivotal encounter, he notes, centred on a specific model:

"I was introduced to Fotona in 2015 when I attended a laser training course run by my colleague Hisham Abdalla. When I heard that the Fotona LightWalker could be used to treat snoring, I knew that this



Dr Jason Pang



was something that I had to investigate. I travelled to Melbourne to visit Innovative Medical Technologies to see if the laser could really do what they said it could."

That fateful meeting at the Oakleigh office of the Fotona Australian distributor led to two personal milestones: He became the first dentist in NSW to own the Dual Erium YAC + Neodymium YAC Fotona LightWalker AT-S and one of the first dentists in Australia to be formally trained by Fotona in this revolutionary dental laser technology.

Since then, the Fotona LightWalker has been nothing short of a breakthrough technology permeating every facet of his professional work, from expanding treatments both in scope and approach - to becoming more customer-focused.

Applications varied across the spectrum: Prepare cavities in teeth

encompasses the training component. After using the Fotona laser for about 9 months, he was invited to speak at the International Fotona Weekend in Slovenia, which coincided with the launch of the Laser and Health Academy (LA&HA) Masters in Laser Dentistry program. On invitation of Paul Baltas, the Founder and Sales Manager of Innovative Medical Technologies, Dr Pang enrolled in the course.

"Our Masters colleagues were oral surgeons, periodontists, endodontists and each brought knowledge of their disciplines into our education. Our mentors were the most experienced Fotona users in the world and they were researchers as well."

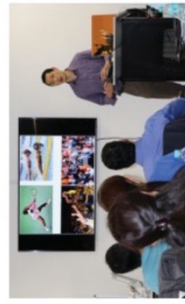
"Being able to ask them questions and watch them perform procedures accelerated our learning dramatically," Dr Pang enthuses.

In May 2017, Dr Pang and fellow Australian dentists, Dr Limhlan Nguyen and Dr Johnny Chan, joined five other international course attendees to become the first graduates of the Masters Program. For Dr Pang, the program was meaningful in professional and personal ways. Reminiscing their camaraderie during the course, he says the doctors still keep in touch, "leaning on each other for support".

Individually, they also brought their knowledge back to share with other dental laser enthusiasts in their home country. For his part, Dr Pang designed a teaching program for newcomers to the fledgling technology, built around the various disciplines including restorative, endodontics, periodontics and implantitis, snoring, surgery and hard/soft tissue.

As a laser educator, Dr Pang has come a long way since his maiden public demonstration at Aestheticon in 2015 where laser procedures were performed on live patients. Today, he runs courses throughout the year with Hisham Abdalla, training dentists around Australia. Apart from Australian gigs, international engagements speaking to diverse audiences in Slovenia, Manila, Singapore jostle for whatever leftover time he can squeeze out of a busy work schedule. He will soon be travelling to Orlando to lecture at the Academy of Laser Dentistry conference.

On hindsight, Dr Pang believes the



value of attending the Masters Program extends beyond learning new techniques to include lifelong lessons in knowledge application and transfer.

"As a practitioner, the Masters program taught me new procedures that I hadn't done before like laser peels, skin rejuvenation and wrinkle removal. It gave me an understanding of best practices for periodontal and peri-implantitis treatments taught by laser periodontists and a deeper understanding of laser physics."

"As an educator, I found that I was taught not only knowledge but how to deliver that to an audience in a way that allows them to absorb and process the information in a meaningful way."

It's amazing to see how laser dentistry has updated treatment concepts both as a practice-building feature and for the wellbeing of patients. For Dr Jason Pang, it has further reinvigorated his passion for dentistry. In Game Changers: Entrepreneurs Leading Change, Dr Pang called the Fotona LightWalker "the perfect complement to the dentistry that [he] was doing."

He wrote: "The laser impacted almost every dental treatment that I did. I remember thinking to myself just the week before, 'Why would you change the name of your business?' as a colleague recently did and yet as soon as I came to realise the impact the laser was going to have in my business it made perfect sense to change the practice name to Cosmic Smile Laser Dental. Mentally for me this was a huge turning point." ♦

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