



## BUSINESS: EDITORIAL

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# A Patient-Dentist Treatment Bridge Between Switzerland and Ukraine Despite the Turbulent Times

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... economic growth offered by medical tourism ...<sup>1</sup>  
Xu and colleagues, 2021

Dental and medical tourism in a peaceful time is highly popular in the current century of globalization.<sup>1-7</sup> The share of dental tourism is 32 percent of the total number of the international medical tourism market.<sup>8</sup> COVID-19 pandemic made its impact on such type of “treatment travels” requiring safety measures and appropriate travel health insurance.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, dental tourism in a wartime is completely unusual and needs to be analyzed. That is why we present a case of such treatment.

An 82-year-old female patient, the resident of Switzerland, received a full circle of dental treatment on the lower jaw (Fig) in our Kyiv-based private practice. The surgical stage of rehabilitation with dental implants was performed in a pre-war period, on January 23, 2022. Two-stage implant surgery technique was applied under sedation, and totally fourteen intraosseous dental implants were placed. The permanent dentures have been produced and fixed in December 2022—a period when the

full-scale Russian military invasion into Ukraine has already started and been continued<sup>10,11</sup>. It is important to understand that at the moment of final prosthetic treatment there were no military actions in Kyiv city and the multiple businesses and hotels gradually returned to their pre-war state. Moreover, our practice applies a management system in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 standard in the field of activity *private stomatological practice* and was certified by TÜV Thüringen e.V. (Jena, Germany) and their intermediary in Ukraine. Certification is performed on annual basis even in a wartime applying the rigorous audit process. Such certification implemented by accreditation institution from a German-speaking state is signaling to German-speaking patients from the countries like Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy that their health can be trusted to this particular private practice.

It is important to notice, that the difficulty of moving the patient to Kyiv for the second stage of treatment was caused by the fact that the air flights were not possible due to the temporary no-fly zone over Ukraine. Therefore, the partner of our clinic

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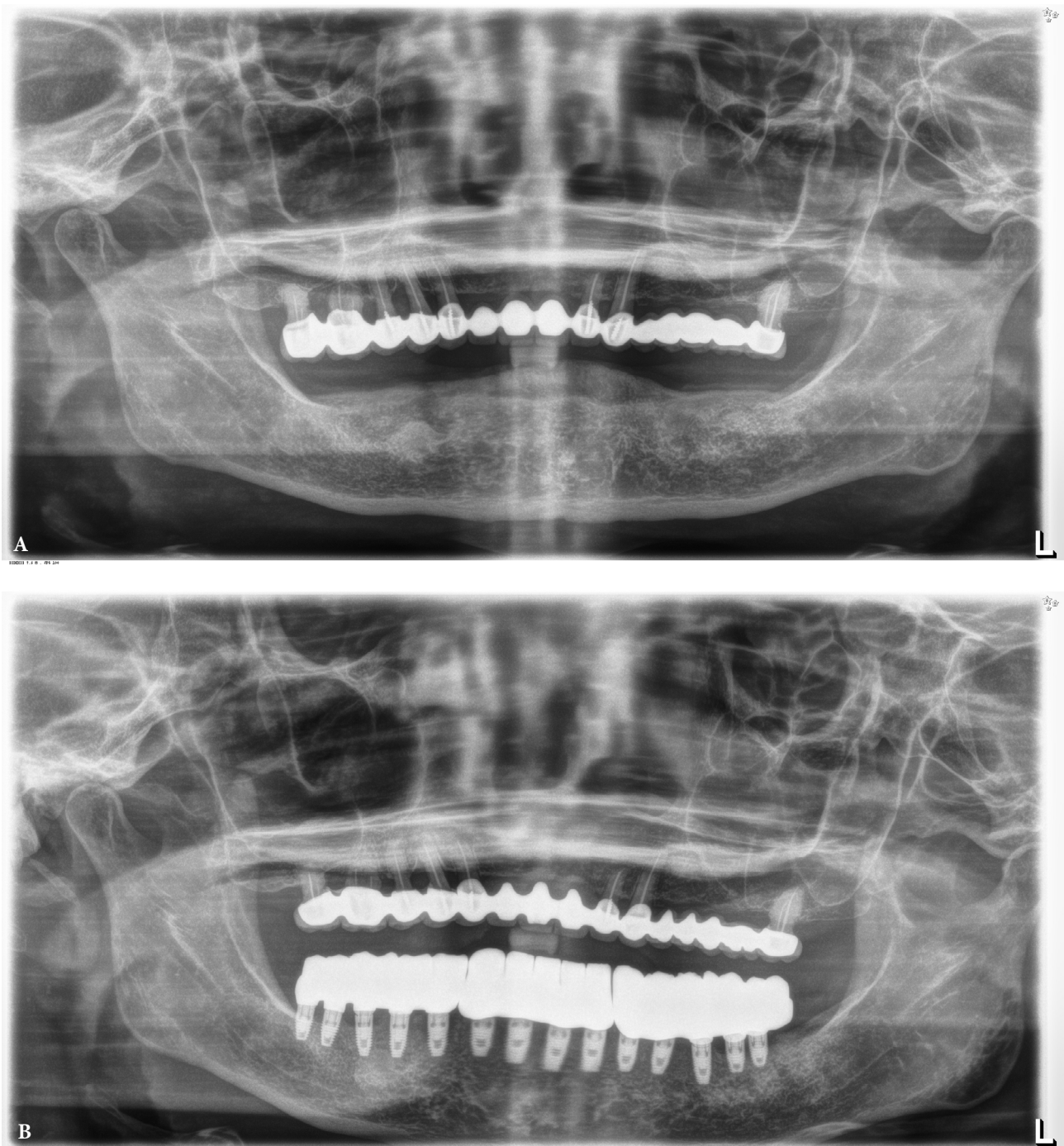
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**FIGURE.** Pre- (A) and post-operative (B) panoramic radiographs show dental rehabilitation in an 82-year-old patient. Fourteen intraosseous dental implants were placed and three dentures with a screw fixation were produced.

accompanied the patient to the Ukrainian border, and a ground transport was organized throughout the territory of Ukraine.

According to [Lwin and colleagues](#) (2021), among all types of dental treatments received by dental

tourists, the share of dental implants is taking 24 percent from the total number of dental procedures.<sup>12</sup> And similar dental travel cases are unique in this difficult time for Ukraine and Europe as a whole. We believe that this is not only a case of resilience of the

dental services in Ukraine, a contribution of private practices as part of state economy to the resilience of the national economy, but also an example of integration of Ukraine into the common economic and healthcare space of free and democratic European zone.

Such patient-doctor treatment bridges contribute to the internationalization<sup>13,14</sup> of private practice. Moreover, each of the dental tourist cases contributes to the entry and expansion of private practice to the market of another country. According to the small proportion data, the patient who live in border region between Switzerland and Germany predominantly choose to receive dental treatment in Germany.<sup>15</sup> Simultaneously with that the most popular European destinations for dental tourism—Hungary, Greece, and Poland<sup>16</sup>—nowadays, despite the COVID-19 and wartime periods, Ukraine opens its opportunities in this significant part of medical tourism<sup>12</sup>.

In summary, we wish private practice owners to stick to the resilience and perseverance principles in growing their practice and contribution to the people's dental health despite any obstacles.

*Thank you to everyone who keeps their businesses running, who keeps jobs so that people can provide for themselves and their families, who pays taxes. Gratitude to all of you!*

—Volodymyr Zelenskyy

President of Ukraine as of 308th day of Russian-Ukrainian war (Dec 28, 2022)

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