

Media release

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS, JUNE 22, 2018

FOR helps restore Easter Island smiles on a humanitarian mission for dental implant treatment

- **Humanitarian dental project taken to Easter Island to treat mandibular edentulism**
- **Foundation for Oral Rehabilitation (FOR) project led by implantology experts Dr. Kenji Higuchi, USA, and Dr. Rubén Rosenberg, Chile**
- **Eleven patients rehabilitated with a definitive full-arch implant bridge in just three days**

Dental implantology experts and the Foundation for Oral Rehabilitation (FOR) have taken a new treatment solution for edentulism to Rapa Nui, also known as Easter Island, in a remarkable humanitarian endeavor. In the week-long project led by surgeons Dr. Kenji Higuchi and Dr. Rubén Rosenberg, eleven native patients suffering from mandibular edentulism were treated with a fixed, full-arch solution and received their final bridge, all within just three days.

The island of Rapa Nui is one of the most isolated inhabited locations in the world. Home to a population of under 8000, the community is served primarily by one resident dentist. However, when in need of dental care, many members of the community are faced with limited available dental services and severe financial restrictions. In response to this need, Rosenberg partnered with FOR Expert Network member, Higuchi, to initiate this inspiring project. Higuchi has been the innovator behind the treatment solution harnessed on this mission, the recently launched Trefoil system. Introduced by Nobel Biocare in 2017, it features a premanufactured bar placed on three dental implants. The final screw-retained bridge can be placed on the day of surgery*.

In Rapa Nui's small local hospital, the life-changing treatment was performed by a voluntary team of surgeons, prosthodontists, lab technicians, nurses, support staff, and the island's primary resident dentist, Dr. Felipe Collao. The surgeries were completed within just two days, and all patients received their final bridge by day three. Utilizing only the Trefoil protocol, this efficient treatment in a small, basic clinical setting was performed without the help of sophisticated dental equipment and technology. With surgery and restoration now complete for all eleven patients, Collao will serve to provide follow-up services along with Dr. Rosenberg and team, who intend to provide on-going support and care for all eleven patients in the years ahead.

To record this life-changing project, a professional film crew followed the progress at every step for a video documentary.

Michael Hotze, Executive Director FOR, said; "We are deeply honored to have taken part in this project, reaching out to an underserved population in providing their much-needed treatment. It is part of our long-term mission to support better implant treatment around the globe, and I look forward to seeing their successful follow-ups in the months and years to come."

Dr. Kenji Higuchi said; "With a chair time of only three days, I am very proud to report that our team completed the Trefoil surgical, restorative and laboratory protocols for 11 patients. While we achieved an unimaginable accomplishment, the appreciation and gratitude from the patients humbled our entire clinical team.

*Depending on clinician preference and close cooperation with the laboratory.

“Most importantly, the gratitude of the Rapa Nui patients involved was through the roof with heartwarming responses. The improvement in their quality of life will be witnessed by the community for years to come.

He added; “Many providers in healthcare understand that we have a responsibility to help those in need, but unless we act on that need we are only offering pity. Rubén and I had the good fortune of learning this humanitarian quality from the father of the modern dental implant, Prof. P-I Brånemark.”

The Foundation for Oral Rehabilitation (FOR) is an independent, international initiative that unites professionals from various disciplines to improve oral health care and support humanitarian leadership. Since its inception in 2013, FOR’s mission has been to help treat more patients in a humanitarian manner that best reflects innovation and the highest standards of scientifically-based treatment.

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