

O P I N I O N C O L U M N

Enough with the discussion about beauty!

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Orthodontists have it all wrong when they go on about beauty and brag about the esthetic enhancements their treatments achieve. As they apply to orthodontics, these terms are out of place and the Social Security reimbursement department turns a deaf ear to such language.

Orthodontic treatment does not make people beautiful, it just makes them normal.

Even if your treatment is successful, your patient will still have his cauliflower ears, his upturned nose, his dull eyes, his pimply skin, his long or moon-shaped face. And, even with the mouth, how much can we do about the shape of the lips, of the teeth and about the movement of the facial muscles that creates a dour look or a sad smile?

Orthodontics does not make people beautiful. It eliminates an ugly facial feature. Afterwards, the patient looks like everyone else again, in other words normal, with some minor defects. And not necessarily beautiful.

Appearing normal is a necessary condition for being beautiful. But there's more to it.

We can't be beautiful if we're not normal, but we can be normal without being beautiful. In fact, this is the case most of the time. Beauty is a whole other story¹.

It's already quite something to be normal and not be embarrassed, thanks to the orthodontist, by a feature that detracts from our appearance. As J. Faure has so aptly stated: "ugliness is a social disease, it can significantly impact the social life of people by placing them at a disadvantage professionally, and can have serious psychological consequences, related to failures in the love life of these individuals caused by this ugliness"².

This notion of a social handicap and a psychological risk that a deformity of the face represents, should be considered in the context of the definition of health provided by the World Health Organization (WHO): "*Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*". This juxtaposition shows that by eliminating ugly facial features, orthodontics, a medical and non plastic surgical discipline, works for health of the individual very precisely

according to the meaning of the word health as given by WHO. What authority can overrule WHO?

A part from exceptional cases, **all** orthodontic treatments are intended to restore health as it is defined by WHO. The only apparent esthetic factor is the appliance that we use.

But, c'mon!, let's not make people think the opposite by saying that we create beauty!

We don't create it. At the very most, we allow it to blossom.

Let's be modest.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Philippe J. Pourquoi un visage plaît. Orthod Fr 2014; 85:127-131.
2. Faure J. Editorial. Orthod Fr 2014;85:1.