

America's Top Dentists:

An Interview with Dr. Kavish Gurjar

Muhammad Tahir - Dental Education Writer

Originally from Ahmedabad, Gujarat in India, Dr. Kavish Gurjar has worked his way to becoming one of the top dentists in America, having graduated with special honors in 2014 New York University's College of Dentistry where he was one of 10 students selected for the periodontal honors program.

From performing dental implant procedures, periodontal surgeries (gum infection that damages gums and can destroy the jawbone), and bone reconstruction, he is also one of the top dentists to do successful cases of bone reconstruction with guided bone regeneration. On top of this, Dr. Gurjar has been awarded the Fellow of International Congress Of Implantologists (ICOI), a prestigious award for practicing implant dentists.

He is currently "creating smiles" out of the "State of the Art Dental Group" in Rockville, MD, but he lives in the Washington D.C. metro area.

Dental Town spoke exclusively to Dr. Gurjar more in-depth about his career and life in our industry:

1. What about being a dentist and implantologist excite you on a daily basis?

Being a dentist with the ability to change patient / people's lives by giving them results beyond their expectations and creating a "wow" experience for every patient excites me on a daily basis the most. There are patients across the United States who need replacement of teeth with dental implants, which they cannot do if they have missing or defective bones. I believe and have proven that I have the skills to restore their life with happiness and restore the defective bone which is lost. Being able to do this for others on a daily basis fuels me to be a better surgeon and dentist everyday and is the reason I am an artisan dentist surgeon / implantologist.

2. Did you always know that you wanted to come to America from Ahmedabad, Gujarat to follow your passion in dentistry?

Yes, I was prepared from the start and my goal was to be the first dentist in my family, as to fulfill my parent's dream that I would become a doctor. I was always passionate about dentistry and the various technologies in the field, but it was very difficult to access it all fully in India. To explain the difference in technology from India and the US: In India we used to take impressions with rubber based materials, whereas in the US we have access to digital impressions so that its quick and easy for patients who have gag reflex, and no materials being stuck in their mouth. So, once I finished my schooling back home, I decided I wanted to upgrade my skills and knowledge and study in the United States. I am proud that I have made it here in America, where the technology is very good, which helps me each day to master my skills and become a better dentist.

3. What valuable lessons did you take away from your time studying at New York University's College of Dentistry?

I was in a diversified atmosphere at NYU with very welcoming and warm individuals. I was honored to be a part of one of the few selected for the periodontal honors program in which I was able to perform surgeries, grafting and placement of dental implants at early age and stages. I learned being a dentist there are so many people who are in need of speciality care and are just wearing dentures and still are unhappy. To be able to learn the skills to give these people back their normal function which will help them to be successful in their lives is a skill I am so thankful to have received by studying at NYU. Because NYU has the biggest federal sponsors for cancer treatment of oral cavities, as students there we were able to gain a lot of exposure to these cases in the human mouth and how to help diagnose and treat it. These procedures, along with learning about how to treat gum disease, do teeth extractions and quickly fix emergencies that arise with patient, NYU's Langone Medical Centre was an incredible place to be in, and I can't thank them enough.

4. Gum disease is growing more and more in America these days. What tips can you give so that people don't find themselves needing periodontal surgeries from you or others?

Gum disease is a disease of teeth, gums and bone having high bacteria in and around gums which causes inflamed sore gums, bleeding, receding gums, sensitive teeth due to root exposure. My advice to those not wanting to experience this would be to use medicated mouth rinse and medicated prescribed toothpaste which helps prevent gum disease. You can also avoid brushing your teeth too hard. Gum disease is present due to multiple reasons and a few factors like genetics, diabetes, medications, malocclusion and smoking. According to my own research, those who smoke or use some type of tobacco are more likely to get some sort of gum disease. In summary, if you smoke, try to stop right away or seek smoking cessation therapy. Everyone should brush their teeth twice a day and floss efficiently twice a day. And as always, everyone should maintain a six months teeth cleaning schedule at their local dental offices no matter what other treatments you are getting so that a dentist like myself can keep an eye out for any problems in your mouth.



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5. You also have found much success with bone reconstruction with guided bone regeneration. What is the most difficult part about these types of procedures with patients?

When we do bone reconstruction with guided bone regeneration, the most difficult part with this procedure is to have the patient be at an inconvenience during the procedure due to the extensive surgery, and post operative swelling. Bone reconstruction with guided bone regeneration is a surgical procedure to stimulate the bone growth in combination to adding bone graft (sterilized bone particles of human cadaver bone) on the defective site of the jaw bone. It is usually performed on patients who have extreme atrophy / defective bone which is lost either due to missing teeth or some sort of infection to the bone. This procedure is performed by very few skilled dentist/surgeons due to being very technique sensitive and extensive and invasive; I am proud to be able to do this type of procedure, however, there are always difficulties with any procedure. In the case of this one, we deal with vital organs, nerves and blood vessels, which makes surgery very critical. If there is a damage to any nerve during surgery it can give permanent paresthesia (numbness of face, loss of touch sensation, loss of vision, loss of muscle control to smile and close eyes, loss of tongue sensation and loss of taste buds). I am also proud to report that I've had no negative cases.

6. With all your knowledge in the field, what new research have you been reviewing that will help move your various practices forward?

It has been 15 years in the field of dentistry now from when I first started my dental journey. I believe in evidence-based dentistry / research, and looking at my patients in 4Dimensions. 3D we all know, but the 4th one is the "patient expectations". It is very important for me to know if I have exceeded my patients expectations. No matter how skillful a doctor is, if they do not see and meet patient expectations it is not a complete success of any surgery. When it comes to new research in reconstruction of the jaw, lot of people are aware of taking a bone from their hip and replacing the defective bone in their mouth, which involves extensive surgery under hospital setting, months to recover from, expensive, patient inconvenience and can be done only by a general surgeon and oral surgeon. But now we have human cadaver bone which can be used to replace defective jaw bone and stimulate bone growth, and this involves only a couple hours surgery and recovery in few days, very cost effective, and predictable better results than hip graft. The new technology and research behind this is something I continue to study and perform. I do not refer a single patient outside for a speciality dentist, as I can now provide everything under one roof as we are ultra equipped with technology.

7. When you aren't working, what do you like to do with your time?

I love to spend time with my family and friends and balance my social life. I enjoy being adventurous by hiking and exploring restaurants locally, while trying to cook different types of cuisines. In relation to my work as a dentist, when I am not at the office, I like to attend all conferences related to dental technology so that I can always be upgrading my own knowledge with new developments in my field. In addition, once a year I like to do free dental services as a way to give back to the community here and help make people aware of proper dental health.

8. How does living in Washington compare to when you went to school in New York and also where you grew up in India?

My life here in Maryland is very busy with family and work. I feel very responsible being a general dentist, and I have learned and grown as a better human being than what I was 10 years ago. Growing up in India, English was never my first language, and I lived in a warm climate with no snow. So, having moved to the United States, I had to learn a new language and also adapt to the climate around me. When I got to New York, my life was very busy learning all new things, and New York was also a very fast-paced environment. Now that I have adapted more and moved myself and family to Maryland, I have been able to find a happy balance, with a medium pace which helps to complement my profession as a dentist.

9. What is your ultimate goal for the future?

My ultimate goal for the future is that by creating world wide awareness, I do not want any patients to have gum disease or have any that have to wear removable, partial or complete dentures. I want to deliver my patients back their actual teeth and help create smiles that they are proud to show off. Beyond this, I want to help serve the community and one day open a complete reconstructive care centre and non-profit foundation, for patients who are financially weak, but still want to achieve the same smiles and teeth that people in better financial situation can.

10. What advice can you give to others around the world who look to you as a role model and want to work as a dentist in America and have the success as you have had?

My advice to everyone out there who is looking to work and be successful as a dentist in the United States (or anywhere), is to work hard, educate your skills and grow your knowledge everyday. My advice to other dentists is that as dentists we deal with human beings and they are not here to just perform experiments on. Follow evidence-based dentistry and always strive to deliver state of the art dental service to every individual without expecting a reward or doing it just for the money.



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