THE IMPORTANCE OF DENTAL RADIOLOGY
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Introduction:
Dental radiology is quickly becoming the standard of care in veterinary dentistry. This is due not only to the fact that it is crucial for proper patient care, but also constitutes a significant income for a veterinary practice.
This article will present 3 cases which were seen one day in our practice. This shows that these are not unusual cases, but situations like this are present in almost all veterinary patients. Utilizing the knowledge gained from dental radiographs not only improves patient care, it also increases acceptance of treatment recommendations. Consequently, it leads to increased numbers of dental procedures performed.
You can use these examples for client education or consider purchasing the “Importance of dental radiology client educational poster”.

Case 1:
6 year old Jack Russell Terrier. No obvious clinical problems noted with the incisors other than a missing 101. (a)
The dental radiograph reveals a retained and resorbing root (red arrows) with severe infection. (b) Extraction induced a significant amount of purulent discharge. The patient was much brighter and happier a few weeks later.
Case 2:
8 year old mixed breed dog with minimal dental disease. On oral exam, the right maxillary second incisor (102) was very slightly darker than the surrounding teeth. (a) Dental radiographs revealed severe infection. (b) A root canal was performed to save the tooth. (c)

(a)  
(b)  
(c)

Case 3:
8 year old standard poodle with fractured mandibular first molar. Pre-operative radiograph reveals a third root (red arrows). This would greatly complicate the extraction procedure and likely result in a retained root.

Conclusion:
Almost every veterinary patient has some form of oral disease and dental radiographs are indicated for all oral disease. Therefore, virtually all patients benefit from dental radiographs. Therefore, dental x-ray equipment should be used on a daily basis in every general practice. From a financial standpoint, there is not a piece of veterinary equipment that has the potential to provide the return on investment that a dental radiology machine does. If a moderately busy practice exposed radiographs whenever necessary, this equipment should be paid for in less than three months. The information provided by radiographs regarding root and bone pathology, as well as documenting complete extraction, is crucial. Furthermore, the time savings during extractions is incalculable. And finally, dental radiographs will provide peace of mind to the clinician, which is priceless.