

Dental College clinic provides care for many

By Patty Pryor

Although the cost of most work on patients at the NU College of Dentistry averages one-third the cost in private practice, the college's number of appointments is decreasing, according to Dr. Stephen Leeper, interim associate dean of dentistry.

This could be for many reasons, but Leeper thinks clinic income has decreased because patients are putting off dental work as long as possible in response to the poor general economy.

"Our fees are increasing just to meet the increasing costs of everything else," Leeper said. "But this holds true for Lincoln area dentists, too.

"We're just not experiencing the increase (in patients) we'd anticipated," he said.

The college consists of 260 pre-doctoral students, 40 dental hygiene students and 20 graduate students, and "accumulates 55,000 patient treatment appointments annually," Leeper said. This averages out to 170 per student, but Leeper stressed that the figure represents appointments only. Some patients may not show up for appointments and others may have more than one appointment, he explained.

Patients diverse

Leeper said that he senses a misconception concerning the type of patients the college attracts.

"Too many people assume that all our patients are indigent people who can't afford to look elsewhere," he said. Because of this, "many people don't bother to call us, because they expect to be turned down."

The dental students treat all types of patients, as far as age, occupation, or income, Leeper said, but he explained that student work can sometimes take 3 or 4 times longer.

Leeper said he thought a patient "might possibly be safer" in coming to a student because students tend to be cautious. He said he doesn't think there are any differences in complaints between student work and professional work.

In fact, "most patients develop an excellent rapport with the students," he said. "They feel that they have an investment in the student and that they're taking part in the training process."

This training begins with traditional lectures and classroom work, followed by technique practice in pre-clinical labs, then actual patient work in the clinic.

However, this process has been modified to gradually introduce the student to the clinical setting, Leeper said.

Earlier involvement

Second semester sophomores now are involved in clinical work and freshmen are introduced to the clinic, serving as assistants to the senior students.

Many students find that they don't like dentistry, Leeper said, and this can be discovered earlier if they are exposed to clinical operation earlier.

"The hope is that if anyone is misplaced, then they will not have wasted two or three years," he said.

Through this program, he added, "we're getting them into what dentistry is all about."

In the Senior General Practice Program, Leeper said, seniors operate under conditions as similar as possible to those in private practice. In this program, the work on a patient is divided among students, so that several students may work on one patient in the area in which each needs practice.

Graduate students are trained for oral surgery, he said, but the more complicated problems requiring sophisticated techniques often are handled at the NU Medical Center in Omaha.

More serious problems usually are detected before any work is begun, according to Dr. David Beeson, assistant professor of dentistry. The patient undergoes a screening through the admissions clinic, Beeson said, and those who need immediate attention are referred to private dentists.

The students' work is supervised at established checkpoints throughout each procedure, Leeper said.

Private practices
"Most all clinical instructors maintain some type of private practice," Leeper

said, totaling two days a month, or one-half day per week. This policy helps keep the faculty up-to-date on changes within the profession, he said.

Leeper said the college currently is facing a "major problem in replacing equipment," which includes 175 separate operating stations.

"This is the 14th year of hard use with the equipment," he said, "and we're facing the necessity of slowly replacing it by a systematic schedule."

Until July 1979, the college was affiliated with UNL, but is currently under the administration of the medical center in Omaha. This was done, Leeper said, because it was generally agreed that dentistry "simply belonged with the allied health professions."

This arrangement also makes it easier for the college to compete for federal funding, he added.

There was some concern that the college would be moved to Omaha, but it will remain in Lincoln for at least the next 10 to 20 years, Leeper said.

'New York Times' prints new edition from Chicago

Long regarded by many as the nation's only true national newspaper, the *New York Times* has started printing a new national edition in Chicago.

The new *Times* that mid-westerners can buy will not feature the familiar retail and fashion ads or New

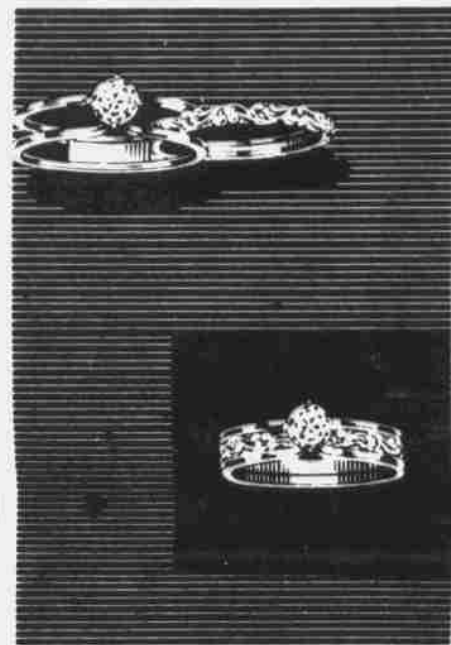
York City news. However, it will be filled with reports and analysis from the paper's far-flung correspondents and all other news, according to the *Times* motto, "that's fit to print."

Nebraskans may inspect the *Times* at either the Bennett Martin Library or at Love Library, which also carries the London edition of the *Times*.

Unfortunately, Lincolniters are not able to buy the *Times* anywhere in town. According to the Arcade Newsstand, the last time anyone in Lincoln sold the *Times* was in 1972. Subscribers, of course, can have the paper delivered to their homes.

The Chicago office of the *New York Times* reports that distribution patterns may "very likely change"

during the coming months, depending upon the popularity of the new national edition.



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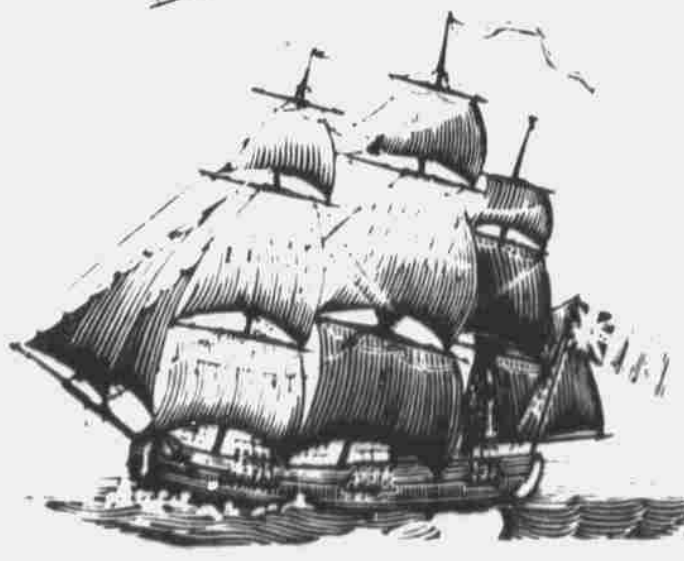


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