

When Dr. Dave, a French-Rwandan dentist decided to come back to Rwanda, he was looking to provide high quality dental implants and oral surgeries in his home country and the region.

Having worked as a dentist in Europe for more than 20 years, the dentist focus was to become a pioneer in high quality oral health.

“I wanted to bring my experience back to Rwanda and offer what is not yet here but urgently needed, such as quality dental implants and oral surgeries,” Dr Dave who is the manager of SEKA Clinic based in Kigali says.

A dental implant procedure is normally performed by inserting artificial tooth roots, but most dentists in Rwanda struggling to maintain a healthy work-life balance have been for long challenged in the field of life-saving technologies.

However, Dr Dave was conscious of the challenges facing most of dental clinics in Rwanda to stay relevant in the evolving medical services where the use of smart technology in many ways can increase dentist precious time for direct patient care.



Through the exclusive partnership with [VIEBEG, a regional start-up](#) that is using emerging technologies to make life easier for 230 hospitals in Rwanda, SEKA Clinic has acquired one of the best 3D-OPG machines and dental equipment.

The most distinguishing feature of this device is the extra oral equipment which collects full oral data in one scan and reconstructs all aspects of high-resolution images as needed for accurate clinical diagnostics.

Endodontic procedures

Rwanda's health authorities have required sound efforts in promoting the

awareness of dental health among the public as many people seem not to value dental health and never go for check-ups unless they get sick.



Children and adult populations had unmet dental caries and periodontal related treatment needs in Rwanda

The most common dental diseases in Rwanda include dental holes, dental caries, and gum diseases.

Estimates by Rwanda Dental Association show that at least 60 per cent of outpatients across the country go hospitals over dental issues in a country where there are only 420 dental therapists in district hospitals.

Seka clinics is among four health facilities that have acquired 3D-OPG machines in the whole Great Lakes Region including Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

“In treating dental patients using cutting edge technology, the focus is on giving hope and better health to people,” Dr Dave said.

Precisely tailored to the everyday routines of general practices, the ORTHOPHOS XG

3D machine that has been offered to Seka Clinic is a hybrid unit, provides the clinical workflow advantages of 2D and 3D together while emitting the lowest possible effective dose for the patient. Dentists like Dr Dave enjoy the ability to instantly view digital images required for endodontic procedures, combined with well-defined 3D volumetric images

[Rwanda Dental Association](#) lists cost, fear, and lack of Medicaid coverage as some of the main reasons why people to forget dental care.

With the latest technologies and services in dental innovation, Rwandan Health officials also attest to the impact of 3D-OPG machines.



Experts believe that access to dental health services in Rwanda remains constrained due to frequent breakdown of critical equipment

Irene Bagahirwa, in charge of Oral Health at Rwanda Biomedical Centre said that while the number of patients seeking for treatment of oral diseases is on the rise, the new technology comes as a solution to replace the old system and improved both patient and healthcare provider's experiences.

Drawing from the latest study conducted by the [Harvard School of Dental Medicine](#) in Rwanda, the availability of oral health services has been found to be challenging in the country and the quality of life is adversely affected by current oral diseases/conditions.

This is because children and adult populations had unmet dental caries and periodontal related treatment needs, it said.

Smart healthcare

Latest official estimates show that the number of patients who sought for treatment of oral diseases increased from 700,000 in 2017 to 900,000 cases in 2021.

Agnes Gatarayiha, the vice representative of School of Oral Health at University of Rwanda, said every year they graduate at least 40 dental therapists, and there is hope that the numbers will one day be sufficient.



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Official reports from the Ministry of Health indicate that there are 420 dental therapists in district hospitals. Only 20 surgeons and 15 health centres can deliver all dental treatment, it said.

While Rwanda has been the pioneer across East African region to adopt innovative solutions with smart healthcare as an important field of the technology's future application, the country's health system still faces several common challenges to save time and improving how health facilities diagnose, manage, and treat diseases.

Norbert Gasangwa, a medical doctor from one of private clinic in Kigali said that access to dental health services in Rwanda remains constrained due to frequent breakdown of critical equipment required to treat patients.

"Thanks to the introduction of new treatment with technological innovations such as 3D-OPG, are slowly changing healthcare for the better in Rwanda," Dr Gasangwa said.