

A Passion for Advanced Prosthodontics

It is the fascinating merging of all kinds of complexities that drew Dr. Asbjorn Jokstad to the field of prosthodontics. "What we do has a biological impact," he explains. "We have to look at more than just one individual tooth. We have to listen to the person with the problem and try to understand that problem. And that requires knowledge, and the ability to communicate to and understand the patient. And of course you have to know a lot about the biology and biomaterials, and then come up with a comprehensive treatment plan. It's that complexity of advanced prosthodontic treatment that appeals to me."

But it's not just the challenge of keeping up with a field of dentistry where the use of biomaterials and new technologies are continually developing and changing that caused Dr. Jokstad to move from the University of Oslo, Norway to the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry. He came here, he says, because of Professor George Zarb. "Dr. Zarb has had an enormous impact on international prosthodontics. If there is somebody that really should be honoured he is the man. No matter what country you come from, if you mention dental implants then Dr. George Zarb at the University of Toronto rings a bell for everyone."

To be allowed to follow in his position as Nobel Biocare Chair in Prosthodontics is "a great honour and a great achievement for me personally."

In addition to his position at the Faculty, Dr. Jokstad is the Scientific Affairs Manager of the World Dental Federation (FDI) located in Geneva, Switzerland. For the past seven years he has been a consultant to the executive director working on issues such as the discussion which recently took place



"Dr. Jokstad is among the most highly regarded academic prosthodontists in the world. He is devoted to improving the scientific basis for clinical research and teaching in dentistry. His skill in evidence-based dentistry and applying electronic tools to dental education is a welcome addition to our already world-class faculty."

PROFESSOR DAVID MOCK
Dean of Dentistry

regarding banning the use of amalgam in Europe. He finds it fascinating that he can be here in Toronto and yet still have an impact on international dental politics. "Communicating with dentists around the world gives me a unique window on what is happening, and goes hand in hand with the international network of dental researchers that I am involved with," he explains. "Dental researchers are a family. There are about 10,000 people, rather like a small city, and after a while you know who's who and who has accomplished what. That's in contrast to the global family of dentists which count one million. Through my role on the FDI, I have a foot in both of these camps, and I find I am perfectly at home in both." In fact, he goes on to say, he believes the biggest problem in the field of dentistry is that the gap between the wet finger dentist and the research institutions have become too far apart. "The research agenda of many people working in dental research institutions is now way beyond the understanding and even the relevance of most dentists." It is a delicate balance, he says, because on the one hand researchers want to do cutting edge, exciting research, that can generate new inventions, while on the other the general dentist wants at all times to know what is best for the patient. There are very few people between those two positions who can say what the scientific evidence of any one procedure is, and this is where Dr. Jokstad hopes to play a role.

Determined not to be "labelled and put on a shelf," Dr. Jokstad says that he is interested in anything that has something to do with clinical research in dentistry.

Despite a childhood and teenage years

spent travelling across Europe and North America (his father was in the military), resulting in international exposure and language skills, prior to coming to Toronto he really had not worked in a location other than the University of Oslo. "Norwegian academics are not normally very keen on moving to other countries to work for a long period, but here I am!" he says.

And his first impressions of Toronto? Surprise that the tax bite is so big – "I thought Norwegians were the world champions in that area!" Overwhelmed by the traffic congestion – "As a keen cyclist I am horrified!" But his gut reaction, he says, is that "We are going to enjoy Toronto very much."

Asbjorn and his wife Anne Gussgard have already attended many cultural activities despite only having been in the city a few months. He calls Toronto a "phenomenal cultural smorgasbord." Some of the performances they have seen have been "Incredible. World class. They easily compete with performances I have seen in cities around the world. That alone is worth the stay here!"

Dr. Asbjorn Jokstad is the Nobel Biocare Chair in Prosthodontics, Professor and Head of Prosthodontics at the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry, and the Scientific Affairs Manager of the World Dental Federation (FDI). Previously Dr. Jokstad was a professor in both cariology and prosthodontics at the University of Oslo in Norway. He completed his undergraduate dental education in 1979 and has been a specialist in prosthodontics and oral function since 1994. He has published approximately 150 research and teaching articles, book chapters and abstracts. Publications and lectures have had emphasis on: evidence-based dentistry, prosthodontics, dental restorative materials, toxicology, and temporomandibular dysfunction. Dr. Jokstad also has extensive experience in the editorial boards of different scientific dental journals.



A marathon runner, Dr. Jokstad had to give up running competitively a few years ago because of injuries. He still enjoys the sport – participating in it, not watching, he emphasizes.

Asbjorn and his wife Anne (shown below) both graduated from the University of Oslo Faculty of Dentistry. Anne is also planning to pursue a research career in Canada.

