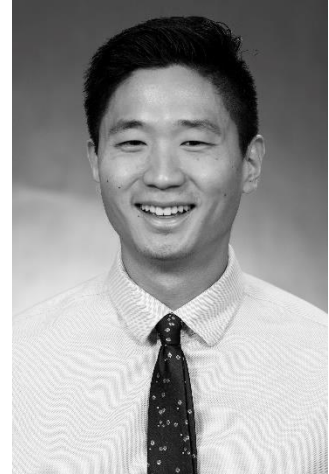


Research Aid Award

Dr. Daniel S. Lee, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

My name is Daniel S. Lee, D.M.D., and I feel honored to have received the 2019 Charles J. Burstone Research Aid Award from the AAO Foundation for my project titled “Identifying factors that impact general dentist referrals to orthodontists.” I am from Peabody, MA (just north of Boston) where I lived most of my life, except from age four to eight during which I lived in Daejeon, South Korea. After attending St. John’s Preparatory High School in Danvers, MA, I moved to Hanover, NH to complete my undergraduate studies at Dartmouth College and graduated with a B.A. in Biology with a focus on Biochemistry. After spending two years working as recall coordinator and then a front office manager at general dental offices in Brookline, MA and Baltimore, MD, I attended the University of Connecticut School Of Dental Medicine, where I obtained my D.M.D. and realized my passion in orthodontics. I now feel genuinely fortunate to attend the UNC Orthodontics Program where I hope to hone my clinical skills and contribute to academia. While I finish my academic journey, I hope to continue my passions of travelling, cooking and staying active.



My project aims to explore changing referral patterns and the relationship between the general dentist and orthodontist in today’s changing landscape. The project will utilize a preliminary qualitative stage with individual interviews with general dentists to aid in the construction of a survey that will incorporate the most impactful and critical questions. An online survey will then be crafted and distributed to 10,000 ADA general dentists which will seek to identify factors related to general dentists’ referral preferences, communication methods, and perceptions of successful orthodontic treatment.

The orthodontic landscape is rapidly changing for both new graduates and established practitioners, and the role of the general dentist, referrals, marketing, and communication are among the driving forces. In this increasingly competitive space, the orthodontist must pursue multifaceted strategies to target both patients and referring doctors. While the role of the referring general dentist may be changing, the orthodontist should understand how to collaborate and recruit referrals by identifying what influences these referral patterns. Ultimately, the findings of this study could guide practice management curricula in both residency programs and continuing education courses.

The Foundation is an inspiring and driving force in orthodontic academia, and it is the work of those who have come before me, as well as the foundation’s guidance, that will allow me to explore the subject I am so passionate about. Completing a study in residency can be difficult due to the challenges in obtaining funding, and with a project that requires the utilization of a diverse array of resources (email lists, transcription services, statistician, survey incentives, etc.), the award allows me to completely focus on effectively carrying out the study. The Foundation’s support has given me an opportunity to complete my graduate school thesis while also allowing me to contribute substantively to the future of orthodontics practice management.