

## Research Aid Award

### Dr. Claudia Acosta-Lenis, Roseman University

My name is Claudia Acosta Lenis. I am originally from Colombia, where I completed my original training as a dentist, and then as an orthodontist. After many years of practicing as an orthodontist in Colombia and inspired by the gold standard of education and practice in the field of orthodontics in The United States, I moved to North America and started my journey to becoming an American Board Certified Orthodontist.

I graduated from the Internationally Trained Dentist Program at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry in 2012. I am currently a second-year Orthodontic/MBA resident at Roseman University of Health Sciences.

As I have witnessed the evolution of orthodontics over the years, and how much the practice of orthodontic has changed in terms of not just techniques and biomaterials, but, somehow, the approach as to how to deliver orthodontic treatment, and by whom. I wanted to explore and understand why the attitude has changed. Specifically, in today's world, the practice of orthodontics is no longer confined to, or even dominated by, specialists in orthodontics, and I am curious about it.

My project, ***“Public Perception and Understanding of Risks of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Orthodontics. A Survey Study”***, may serve to answer the questions of why people are bypassing the orthodontist for their needs, and if they are aware of the specialty of Orthodontics in general. Additionally, the study asks the important questions of the laypeople's understanding of the limitations and risks of unsupervised orthodontic treatment, and who is responsible for such treatment.

The Foundation is an supportive and encouraging 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 one of the subjects I am so passionate about. The Funding by the Foundation will allow this study to go forward and, hopefully, help us all understand what motivates the layperson. In so doing, we, as orthodontists, will be in a better position to educated them as to why it is important to have treatment rendered by trained orthodontists. At the same time, we orthodontists should be able to understand why the gap between patient and provider exists, and why the specialty has fallen out of favor.

Completing a research project while in residency can be difficult due to the challenges in obtaining funding. The award allows me to completely focus on effectively carrying out this study. The Foundation's support has given me an opportunity to complete my graduate school project while also allowing me to contribute substantively to the future of orthodontics practice management, and hopefully advance my academic career. It has always been my desire to work in academia as an orthodontist. I believe that a strong connection with the Foundation is essential for those of us who strive to enhance the future of academic orthodontics.

