# Why I Invested

CLINICAL PHOTOGRAPHY

# Photography Workflows that Strengthen Clinical Communication

## EyeSpecial® digital dental camera from Shofu Dental Corporation streamlines documentation across practices.

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JENNIFER DERSE, DDS

Jennifer Derse, DDS, chief clinical director of Espire Dental, has built a career centered on growth, mentorship, and clinical predictability. Since earning her degree from Marquette University School of Dentistry in 2005, Dr. Derse has focused extensively on restorative and cosmetic dentistry while also developing a strong reputation as an educator and mentor. At Espire Dental, she oversees clinical mentorship and development across more than 30 practices, helping doctors and teams create systems that improve consistency, communication, and patient care.

"My role is to mentor and support our doctors clinically," Dr. Derse says. "That means chart audits, in-office coaching, helping our teams build consistent systems, and shaping how we do dentistry across the organization while tailoring it to each practice."

Dr. Derse maintains that the foundation of successful dentistry lies in the overlap between predictable clinical outcomes and trusting patient relationships. "A patient isn't going to say yes to comprehensive treatment if they don't trust you," she says, "and trust doesn't hold up if your dentistry isn't predictable."

That emphasis on communication, transparency, and collaboration has also influenced how Dr. Derse evaluates technology. Among the tools that have had a meaningful impact across Espire Dental is the EyeSpecial® digital dental camera from Shofu Dental Corporation. Designed specifically for dental photography, the EyeSpecial offers one-touch operation, autofocus capabilities, a lightweight body design, and preset shooting modes intended to simplify image capture in clinical settings.

Dr. Derse's interest in the EyeSpecial stemmed from years of experience using DSLR photography systems. "Every time I tried to implement DSLR photography with a team, they were terrified of it," she says. "With a DSLR, I was essentially asking my assistants and hygienists to become amateur photographers on top of being clinicians."

In her experience, the complexity of DSLR systems often prevented widespread adoption within practices. Even after teams received training, photography frequently became inconsistent or abandoned altogether. Dr. Derse notes that many practices invest in sophisticated photography equipment only to see it sit unused in a drawer because the learning curve disrupts workflow efficiency.

"I started hearing more discussions about the EyeSpecial among colleagues in advanced continuing education and restorative dentistry circles," she says. "I wanted something that would let our teams take high-quality photos without the learning curve killing the workflow."

Once the EyeSpecial was introduced into her practice environment, adoption occurred quickly. Rather than intimidating team members, the camera simplified photography to the point where assistants and hygienists felt comfortable incorporating it into daily routines almost immediately. "The teams immediately started fighting for it," Dr. Derse says with a laugh. "I should actually say hoarding it."

According to Dr. Derse, one of the EyeSpecial's greatest strengths is its ability to eliminate barriers that traditionally prevent consistent clinical photography. The camera's preset shooting modes and autofocus capabilities reduce the need for manual adjustments, while the large LCD touchscreen allows team members to quickly verify image quality before the patient leaves the chair. "The EyeSpecial takes that barrier to entry away," she says. "The presets are dialed in for what we actually take pictures of, so the team isn't fiddling with settings between every photo."

This ease of use has proven particularly valuable within a multi-location DSO environment. Dr. Derse explains that standardization becomes increasingly important as organizations grow, especially when onboarding new employees and maintaining consistency across practices. "A few things matter when you're trying to standardize across a group," she says. "First, the device has to be something every team member can be trained on quickly. Second, the output has to be consistent regardless of who's holding it."

The EyeSpecial has helped support

that consistency throughout Espire Dental. Because team members across locations can produce similarly high-quality images with minimal training, clinicians are able to rely on more standardized documentation regardless of which office captured the photographs.

"That's huge for a multi-location group like ours," Dr. Derse says. "A doctor in one office and a doctor in another office are getting the same quality of documentation to work from."

She also emphasizes that the benefits extend beyond DSOs. In her experience conducting chart audits and consulting with private practices, inconsistent documentation remains a widespread issue throughout dentistry regardless of practice model. "This is important in private practice and DSOs," she says. "Sometimes when I have audited private practices they pretty much equal missing documentation because they're on islands without oversight or someone sharing best practices with them."

Beyond operational consistency, Dr. Derse believes photography plays a critical role in patient communication and case acceptance. She describes photography as a means of involving patients directly in their own diagnosis and treatment decisions. "When I put a clear, well-lit photo of a patient's mouth up on the screen and ask them, 'What do you see?' so many times they diagnose themselves," she says. "I'm not selling them anything. I'm including them in the conversation."

According to Dr. Derse, the EyeSpecial supports these conversations because the images are clear, color accurate, and easy to capture during routine appointments. Hygiene teams can take a complete photographic series during recall visits without significantly disrupting workflow, allowing doctors to review images chairside with patients during examinations. "The doctor walks in for the exam, the photos are already up on the screen, and we're having a real conversation with the patient about what they see," she says.

Dr. Derse also values the EyeSpecial's role in improving documentation quality and continuity of care across practices. In a growing DSO environment where patients may transfer between offices, standardized photographic records help clinicians quickly understand existing conditions and treatment history.

"The EyeSpecial gives more consistent photos, which means charts are more defensible and our doctor-to-doctor handoffs are smoother," she says. "If a patient transfers from one Espire practice to another, the next clinician isn't starting from scratch."

Another factor contributing to Dr. Derse's positive experience has been her long-standing relationship with Shofu. In addition to the EyeSpecial, Espire Dental utilizes several other products from the company throughout its practices. "Shofu makes products that actually work in real practices," she says. "The team behind it has been collaborative and engaged, which matters when you're rolling something out across a group."

For clinicians considering expanding their use of photography, Dr. Derse encourages them not to delay implementation while waiting for advanced training. "The EyeSpecial lets you get photography out of the someday pile and into your systems," she says.

Ultimately, Dr. Derse believes consistent photography has become an essential component of modern dentistry, supporting patient education, clinical documentation, interdisciplinary communication, and legal protection. In her view, the EyeSpecial simplifies that process enough to make comprehensive photography achievable for virtually any practice setting. "The bigger shift is deciding that documentation and patient engagement are non-negotiable parts of how you practice," she says. "Once you make that commitment, the right tool makes it easy to follow through."

For Dr. Derse, the EyeSpecial has helped transform photography from an inconsistent aspiration into a dependable clinical system. By improving efficiency, standardization, and patient communication across both individual practices and large group environments, the camera has become an important part of delivering predictable, collaborative patient care.




## Key Points

- The EyeSpecial® digital dental camera is designed exclusively for dentistry allowing any team member to take perfect pictures every time, and supports photography for case presentation, clinical documentation,orthodontics, and laboratory communication.
- The camera features nine shooting modes, fast autofocusing capabilities, anti-shake functionality, and intuitive one-touch operation for efficient and reproducible imaging.
- Its lightweight design, large LCD touchscreen, and water- and chemical-resistant construction support ease of use and infection control in clinical settings.
- The EyeSpecial offers exceptional depth of field range, a high-performance 49 mm close-up lens, and HIPAA-compliant image management capabilities to support patient privacy and security.