

Evidence Based Dentistry For The Dental Hygienist: The Key to Success in Oral Health

As a dental hygienist, your main goal is to provide the best oral care for your patients. But how do you know if the treatments and procedures you are implementing are truly effective? This is where evidence-based dentistry comes into play, offering a systematic approach that combines the best available research evidence with patient preferences and clinical expertise. In this article, we will dive deep into the world of evidence-based dentistry and explore how it can revolutionize your practice.

Understanding Evidence-Based Dentistry

Evidence-based dentistry (EBD) is a contemporary approach that aims to integrate the most relevant scientific findings into clinical decision-making. It requires the dental hygienist to critically evaluate the available evidence, such as research studies, systematic reviews, and clinical guidelines, to determine the most effective treatments and interventions for their patients.

By relying on evidence-based dentistry, dental hygienists can move away from anecdotal practices and base their decisions on solid scientific evidence. This ensures that their treatments have a higher probability of success and reduces the risk of ineffective or harmful interventions.

Evidence-Based Dentistry for the Dental Hygienist

by Kaye Dennan (Kindle Edition)

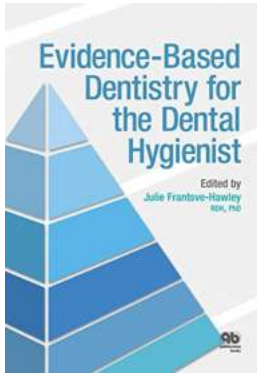
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Why Is Evidence-Based Dentistry Important?

The core strength of evidence-based dentistry lies in its ability to improve patient care outcomes. By utilizing the latest research evidence, dental hygienists can ensure that the treatments they provide are based on proven effectiveness. This approach also allows for personalized patient care, as individual preferences and circumstances are taken into account alongside the available evidence.

Implementing evidence-based dentistry in your practice can also enhance your professional reputation. By staying up-to-date with the latest research findings, you position yourself as a knowledgeable and credible dental hygienist. Patients are more likely to trust you and perceive you as an expert in your field, leading to increased patient satisfaction and loyalty.

The Process of Evidence-Based Dentistry

The practice of evidence-based dentistry involves a systematic approach that can be broken down into five key steps: asking a clinical question, acquiring the evidence, appraising the evidence, applying the evidence, and evaluating the outcomes.

1. Asking a Clinical Question

The first step is to identify the specific clinical question or problem you wish to address. This could be anything from the effectiveness of a certain dental procedure to the most appropriate oral hygiene products for a specific patient group.

To formulate your question effectively, it is recommended to use the PICO framework:

- P - Patient or problem: Who are the patients being treated?
- I - Intervention: What treatments or interventions are being considered?
- C - Comparison: What alternatives are available?
- O - Outcome: What are the desired outcomes?

Utilizing this framework allows you to develop a clear and focused clinical question that will guide your evidence search.

2. Acquiring the Evidence

Once you have formulated your question, it's time to gather the relevant evidence. This step involves conducting a comprehensive search of scientific literature, databases, and trustworthy resources. It is essential to ensure that the sources you use are current and peer-reviewed to guarantee the validity of the evidence obtained.

The evidence may come in the form of research studies, systematic reviews, clinical guidelines, or expert opinions. It is crucial to critically evaluate the quality and relevance of each source to ensure its applicability to your clinical question.

3. Appraising the Evidence

The next step is to assess the quality and validity of the evidence gathered. This involves evaluating the methodology used in research studies, examining potential biases, and determining the level of evidence provided.

Various tools and frameworks, such as the GRADE (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation) approach, can help in this appraisal process. These tools provide a systematic way to assess the strength of the evidence and grade its quality.

4. Applying the Evidence

Once you have appraised the evidence and deemed it reliable, you can proceed to apply it in your clinical decision-making. This step involves considering the patient's preferences and values in combination with your clinical expertise and the available evidence.

Based on this comprehensive evaluation, you can determine the best course of action and treatment plan for your patient. Remember, evidence-based dentistry is not about blindly following guidelines, but rather incorporating the evidence into a personalized approach that suits the patient's needs.

5. Evaluating the Outcomes

The final step of evidence-based dentistry is to evaluate the outcomes of your treatment. This involves monitoring the patient's progress, assessing the effectiveness of the chosen intervention, and adjusting the approach if necessary.

Continuous evaluation and feedback allow for ongoing improvements in your practice. By measuring the outcomes, you can assess the success of your evidence-based decision-making and make any necessary adjustments for future cases.

Implementing Evidence-Based Dentistry in Your Practice

Integrating evidence-based dentistry principles into your practice requires dedication and commitment. Here are some key tips to get you started:

1. Stay Updated

Keep abreast of the latest dental research by subscribing to reputable journals, attending conferences, and participating in continuing education programs. Being aware of the latest evidence ensures that you are providing the most advanced and effective care to your patients.

2. Establish a Reliable Network

Collaborate with other dental professionals, such as dentists and researchers, to exchange knowledge and stay informed. Networking with peers can expose you to different perspectives and insights, enriching your understanding of evidence-based dentistry.

3. Develop Critical Appraisal Skills

Enhance your ability to critically analyze research studies and evidence by familiarizing yourself with appraisal tools. This will enable you to assess the quality and validity of various sources and make informed decisions for your patients.

4. Involve Patients in Decision-Making

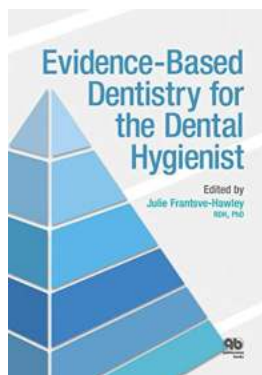
Patient-centered care is at the core of evidence-based dentistry. Engage your patients in discussions about treatment options, explaining the evidence behind each recommendation. This empowers them to make informed decisions and improves treatment satisfaction.

5. Evaluate Your Outcomes

Regularly review the outcomes of your evidence-based treatments and interventions. Assess any areas for improvement and reflect on how the evidence impacted those outcomes. By continuously evaluating your practice, you can refine your decision-making process and achieve better results.

Evidence-based dentistry is a valuable approach that can transform the way dental hygienists provide care. By integrating current research evidence with patient preferences and clinical expertise, you can ensure the delivery of consistent and effective treatments.

Remember, evidence-based dentistry is not a one-time event but an ongoing commitment to staying informed and continuously improving your practice. Embracing this approach will set you apart as a dental hygienist dedicated to delivering the highest quality of oral health care. Invest in evidence-based dentistry and witness the positive impact it can have on your patients and your professional growth.



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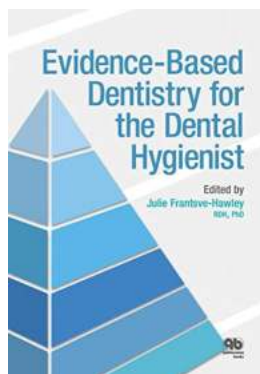
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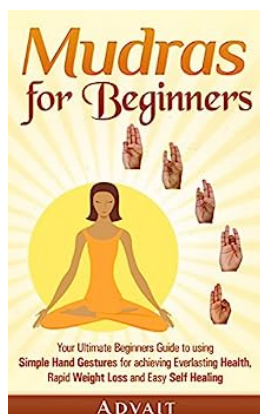


Like any other dental professional, dental hygienists must practice evidence-based dentistry (EBD) to provide the best care to their patients, whether it be through scaling and root planing, caries prevention, or patient education. This book is intended as a textbook for dental hygienists to learn the importance of EBD in the practice of dental hygiene as well as how to implement EBD practices and share EBD findings among office staff. As the dental knowledge base evolves and scientific discoveries are made, dental hygienists must understand how to seek out and evaluate findings and, if appropriate, apply them in their clinical practice, and this book provides all the necessary tools to do just that.



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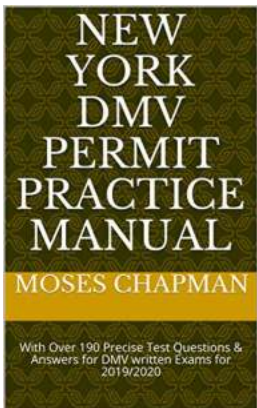
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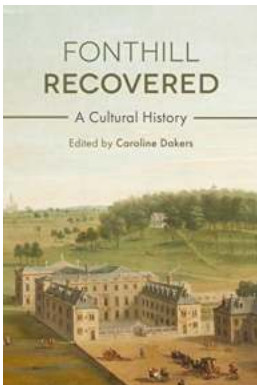
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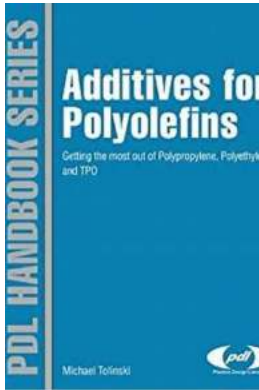
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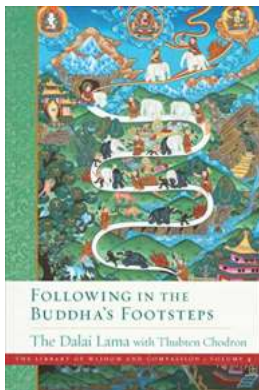
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