Guidelines and Evidence-based Dentistry

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A rapidly changing society
- The production of new knowledge is at maximum in historical context

Dental journals in circulation

Source: Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory
Where and by who is new knowledge in oral sciences developed?

The clinical practitioners

- Single handed GPs/specialists in teams; secondary/tertiary care
- Great diversity of experience, interest and capacity
- Draw on a panoply of experience
- Pragmatism: what works - what creates problems

The researchers

- Creates “scientific evidence”
- Formulation of ideas, hypotheses, study design, data collection
- Peer review, internal/external validity, debates within paradigms
- Report findings in probabilities, not absolutes
The appraisers of evidence for clinical practice

- Epidemiologists, health economists, statisticians, social scientists, and clinicians
- Collect, abstract and appraise practice related knowledge
- Debates about value and balance between consensus and evidence, rigour of data and application of statistics

Developers of local guidelines and protocols

- Local consensus, sometimes on national guidelines
- Clinical specialists seeking ways to influence peers

A rapidly changing society

- The production of new knowledge is at maximum in historical context
- Incessant replacements of established ideas and concepts
Dentists’ daily situation: An information overload

- Advertising (producers, colleagues)
- Meetings/courses
- Dental literature
- WWW
- Patients & (groups)
- Popular magazines & Media

We need to consider not only the **amount** of information, but also the **quality** of this information.

Solution: Integrate evidence-based principles in clinical practice

- A practical aspect
  - A strategy for solving clinical problems on a daily basis
- An ethical aspect
  - A strategy for being reasonably certain that my advice and treatments are the best available to my patients
A rapidly changing society

- The production of new knowledge is at maximum in historical context
- Incessant replacements of established ideas and concepts
- Information technology has improved the potential for information transfer to everybody

New patients?

Information transfer to patients

- Wish to remain sound, look healthy... young!!!
- Competitive health providers and information sources
- Patient information and communication
General practitioners need guidance on professional issues in the information age.

Who’s responsibility to disseminate new research findings to the community of dental practitioners?

... and verify that this is also implemented?
Dentists' decisions on prophylactic removal of mandibular third molars: a 10-year follow-up study

European Association of Dental Public Health, Athens, September 2002
How can guidelines be made valid and applicable?

Communication barriers hinder development and implementation of good clinical guidelines

BARRIERS: Ignorance-Defensiveness-Arrogance

Different educational backgrounds, evaluation of best practice

Pressures, priorities, language, preoccupations
Guidelines - in sum:  

SHIT IN  

SHIT OUT  

Where to find guidelines in dentistry?
Thank you for your kind attention