

EBD Podcast Series

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Introduction to Podcast Series

The Evidence-Based Dentistry Journal along with the Centre for Evidence-Based Dentistry has been at the forefront in providing clinicians with high quality summaries of research evidence, and the tools needed to find, appraise and implement evidence from other sources.

We felt it would be useful to go a step further by finding out how individuals around the world are incorporating evidence into their work practices, whether this be in their patient treatments, teaching or research.

Each interview seeks to discover how the individual has developed their evidence-based skills and what evidence-based practices they've managed to introduce into their environment. We will find out what involvement they have in evidence-based dentistry now, what the challenges have been in achieving what they have, and we'll ask how they see evidence-based dentistry developing in the future.

Each recording will be approximately ten minutes long and will be placed as a podcast on the Evidence-Based Dentistry Journal's website (www.nature.com/ebd/index.html) whilst here in the journal we will publish excerpts from the interviews.

We do hope you'll enjoy listening to these personal interviews and will take something away to help develop your own evidence-based practice.

Excerpts from an interview with Debora Matthews



Debora Matthews is Chair of the Department of Dental Clinical Sciences at Dalhousie Faculty of Dentistry, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Debora is a clinical epidemiologist with a specialty in Periodontics and evidence-based dentistry.

The interview took place on 22nd September 2010 using a Voice over Internet Protocol Service and is abridged. To hear the full interview please visit www.nature.com/ebd/index.html and follow the links for podcasts.

On teaching evidence-based dentistry at Dalhousie Faculty of Dentistry:

"We start in the first year and talk to the students about what evidence-based dentistry is, why it's important, how to read a research paper...not to be afraid that just because it's a research paper they won't understand it... We talk about how to write a scientific paper and teach them how to develop a clinical question in the PICO format. Our dental librarian goes over an introduction session introducing PubMed and searching the internet for evidence-based sites... In the second year we do more critical appraisal, looking primarily at randomised clinical trials. They develop a PICO question and a

search strategy... And then in the third year we talk about systematic reviews and they have to do a critique of a systematic review."

On bringing evidence onto the clinic:

"I've been running some faculty development courses over several years and so more of them are becoming more aware. They're asking the students to justify why they might use a product or a technique, what evidence that might be based on, or they might ask them to go look at a website or search a systematic review on a particular topic. Ideally I would like students to be searching all the time before starting something they're not comfortable or familiar with, or something that's new."

On becoming an enthusiast for evidence-based dentistry:

"I was a general dentist for eleven years and did some part time clinical teaching and realised that the longer I taught the less I really knew. When I finished my diploma in periodontics I did a masters degree at McMaster part-time (in Health Research Methodology). The McMaster programme is part of the centre of that whole movement (in evidence-based healthcare) so it's hard not to get enthusiastic about that. It just made sense to me. As a person who'd done clinical practice, who tried to read research and not understood it, who had a closet full of gizmos because they looked good when the salesman came by – you know, I think it really resonated with me."

On the future of EBD teaching at Dalhousie:

"All of our students now have a laptop and all of our coursework is online. They're using their laptops in the clinic and we're starting to develop an electronic patient health record. I would like them not just to type in treatments and their progress notes everyday but to use it on a more consistent basis to look up things like the systematic reviews or the secondary evidence such as we find in Evidence-Based Dentistry Journal or on the ADA (American Dental Association) evidence-based site where they have critical summaries, where things are distilled for them but they can still understand and critique them."

On the development of EBD generally:

"I still really believe that we need to develop evidence-based, consensus-derived practice guidelines that are useful for clinicians. In this day and age of texting and Facebook they need quick messages – they ask a question and they get no more than a paragraph answer. It's all well and good for academics to critique the biases in a systematic review but most clinicians frankly don't care about that. They just want to know what's going to work for them. And so I would like to see more one-shot very simple, distilled answers."

Our thanks go to Debora for sharing her experiences of EBD with us.

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