

Other journals in brief

A selection of abstracts of clinically relevant papers from other journals.
The abstracts on this page have been chosen and edited by Paul Hellyer.

Delegating consent to AI

Allen J W, Earp B D, Koplin J, Wilkinson D. Consent-GPT: is it ethical to delegate procedural consent to conversational AI? *J Med Ethics* 2023; DOI: 10.1136/jme-2023-109347.

AI may perform better than a junior doctor.

In order to speed clinical flow, informed consent is often delegated in part to a junior member of a team, who may lack the depth of knowledge necessary to ensure patient autonomy and informed decision making.

Recent development in artificial intelligence (AI), including large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, suggest that they have the capability to generate meaningful bespoke conversations with users and respond to questions. One advantage would be the ability to record and store the 'conversation' for future reference.

It is foreseeable that to overcome the weaknesses in the current process, parts of the consent procedure could be delegated to AI systems. Ethical concerns include doubts about the accuracy of AI understanding and a lack of trust and fear of loss of privacy from patients. Whilst ultimate responsibility for consent would remain with the senior clinician, AI may have some advantages over a junior doctor in the process, in that AI can be 'comprehensive, engaging and standardised.'

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-023-6620-0>

How to talk about fluoride applications

Cruz S, Ko A, Chi D L. A Qualitative Study on Dentists' Communication Approaches in Managing Fluoride-Hesitant Caregivers. *JDR Clin Trans Res* 2023; DOI: 10.1177/23800844231203673.

Many do it badly – unengaged, detached and authoritarian.

Caregivers may be hesitant about allowing the application of fluoride varnish to children in their care. Twenty-seven dentists were interviewed about reactions which included:

- Leaving decisions entirely to the caregiver – to avoid conflict but still recommending its use – described as reductionist and low engagement
- Educating the caregiver – describing the benefits and citing the scientific evidence – moderate engagement and detachment
- Insisting on fluoride application – even when requested not to ask again, asking at every visit – authoritarian and pleading
- Engaging with the caregiver and the child – empathising, opening a dialogue and offering alternatives – tailored communication and high engagement – the preferred approach.

The authors suggest that most of these approaches are not evidence-based, and that there is a need for education in communication skills. Dental students should be exposed to evidence-based patient provider communication strategies and be able to demonstrate them.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-023-6622-y>

Implants and social media

Ellakany P, Aly N M, Hassan M G. #implantology: A content analysis of the implant related hashtags on Instagram. *J Prosthet Dent* 2023; DOI: 10.1016/j.prosdent.2023.10.013.

Full face picture receives more 'likes'.

The global dental implant market was reported to be valued at 4.6 billion USD in 2002 and is estimated to grow at almost 10% per year over the next seven years. Patients seek health-related information through social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Searching Instagram, using 12 implant-related hashtags on one day, the authors found 4,541,867 relevant posts. The 12 most popular posts under each hashtag were analysed.

Individual dentists posted 42% of the posts, 'dental interest groups' (technicians, dental companies and practice accounts) posted 41% and patients 17%. Posts considered educational received significantly higher likes or views than posts promoting practices or products, but only 37% of the educational posts contained pictures, compared to 70% of the promotional posts. Eighty-five percent of the educational posts shared clinical facts but there was a low percentage of accuracy.

The visual nature of Instagram makes it easy for dentists to showcase their expertise but concerns remain about patient privacy and accuracy of information provided.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-023-6621-z>

Caring for the oral health of the homebound

Mitchell G, Stark P, Wilson C B *et al.* 'Whose role is it anyway?' Experiences of community nurses in the delivery and support of oral health care for older people living at home: a grounded theory study. *BMC Nurs* 2023; **22**: 359.

Whose job is it anyway?

Older people are likely to suffer declining health towards the end of life and thus become increasingly dependent on others for support. Oral health in this scenario is frequently overlooked. Care at home is increasing as an option for this cohort, rather than residential nursing home care. Community nurses (aka district nurses, home care nurses) therefore 'hold a unique position to effectively assess plan, refer to dental services and provide support for oral healthcare amongst older individuals living at home'. Four areas of concern were developed from face-to-face interviews with 15 community nurses:

- Education – little post-qualification education is available
- Practice – lack of time prevented routine oral healthcare
- Confidence – lacking confidence in and liaising with dental professionals
- Motivation – some were keen to develop this service to patients, while others felt it was beyond their role.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-023-6623-x>