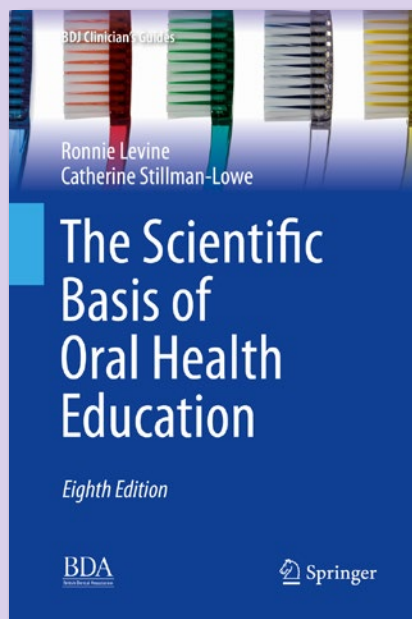


The scientific basis of oral health education, eighth edition

Ronnie Levine,
Catherine Stillman-Lowe
2019
Springer
price £74.99 pp. 96
ISBN: 9783319982069



The authors of this book state: 'while dental professionals have had the knowledge of how to prevent dental caries for more than 50 years it remains the most prevalent

of all diseases, affecting more than 2.5 billion people globally'. It is in this context that any dental professional will find this book useful. Since it was first published in 1976, this edition has been expanded from a small advice booklet to coordinate messages for UK dental professionals into a comprehensive book for an international readership. In order to promote good oral health, the original four key messages are now five; relating to diet, mouth hygiene, fluoride, dental attendance and now, in addition, tobacco.

There are twelve chapters included along with a guide as to how to use the book. The structure follows the above five key messages with additional chapters covering the topics of erosion, advice for children under five-years-old, oral cancers, other oral diseases, advice for denture wearers and first aid for traumatised front teeth. A contextual chapter considers the topic of health education, which defines health from the social model.

It is refreshing to see the authors recognise the social model of health and also the inequalities in the distribution of caries in the UK and internationally. In my opinion, the authors could have taken the opportunity to highlight that, in the UK, caries is no longer considered a problem in higher socioeconomic child cohorts. The

authors identify the need for behavioural approaches without expansion on their application, particularly for the social groups with caries.

The authors touch on the evidence suggesting that the manner of the communication influences behavioural outcomes, as well as the need for improved sender communication skills and better evaluation of outcomes. If child cohorts experiencing high levels of caries are to be reached and an impact made on their health, then skills in the delivery of appropriate behavioural change messages are important. When discussing the aetiology of caries, the role of remineralisation could have received greater emphasis particularly as both caries and erosion need mouth conditions that enable remineralisation to occur.

Finally, it is difficult to establish from the text of the book that plaque biofilm is a normal life process that needs to be controlled rather than removed. A good analogy is a beard: choosing shaving controls hair growth for a clean shaven face, choosing mouth hygiene controls plaque growth for oral health!

Wayne Richards