



Needleman I, Worthington H.
Evidence based dentistry for effective practice

London and New York: Martin Dunitz.
 ISBN 1-84184-199-4.

To my knowledge, this is the first dental textbook devoted exclusively to evidence-based dentistry. The book has been edited by a group of individuals who have been closely linked with the early development of evidence-based dentistry and the growth of the Cochrane Oral Health Group.

The volume has 13 chapters which cover the development of evidence-based dentistry, the various stages of the evidence-based approach, the Cochrane Collaboration and the role of the Cochrane Oral Group. The book also has sections describing the potential impact of evidence-based dentistry on the teaching of dentistry at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The fact that an evidence-based approach is not restricted to merely the key skills of electronic database-searching and critical appraisal of articles is made well in the final chapter of the book, which examines a whole matrix of impacts evidence-based dentistry must make in order for it to be truly effective in changing practice. The book also contains an appendix with some useful clinical scenarios and worked examples of how to formulate questions and develop search strategies.

With a range of authors discussing what is a relatively clear methodological approach there is a tendency for repetition in the text, particularly when read from cover to cover, but this is more of a reference book for dipping in and out of than a manual of how to be an evidence-based dentist. That said, the book does give the reader a good overview of the basic skills of question formulation, literature searching and critical appraisal, but as with most skills these are best learnt by doing and honed by practice. Courses in these skills are increasingly available from a wide range of groups (see forthcoming events page) and I would suggest that all dentists attend at least one of these.

There are one or two minor inconsistencies, such as the different chapters with different estimates of the number of dental journals and published articles, but this could be related to the rapidly

increasing numbers of journals and articles available. Such minor problems do not detract from what is a very useful text.

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Evidence-Based Dentistry (2003) **4**, 44.

doi:10.1038/sj.ebd.6400180

Carl Heneghan C, Badenoch D.
Evidence-based Medicine Tool Kit

London: BMJ Books.
 ISBN 0-7279-1601-7.

This pocket-sized text has been designed as a summary or reminder of the key elements necessary to practice evidence-based medicine. The book itself is based on materials that have been developed by the Centre for Evidence-based Medicine.

The book has sections about formulating questions and finding evidence, along with checklists and hints for appraising systematic reviews and papers that address therapy, diagnosis, harm, aetiology and prognosis. There is also a short section on applying evidence to patients, a glossary of terms and a list of useful websites. As with all texts that publish links to websites, it suffers from the fact that one or two of the suggested links are no longer valid. Although all the examples used are medical, it is still a very useful text.

The book describes itself as minimalist and I would agree with this. As it is designed as a summary or reminder, I would also suggest that it is most useful for someone who has already been on an evidence-based healthcare or critical appraisal course. It would make a useful companion text to evidence-based dentistry for effective practice, and when I am teaching, I usually carry a copy with me.

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