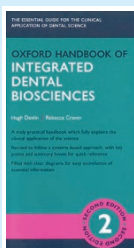


## BOOK REVIEW



## OXFORD HANDBOOK OF INTEGRATED DENTAL BIOSCIENCES, SECOND EDITION

Hugh Devlin and Rebecca Craven

Oxford University Press

2018; price £29.99 pp. 336

ISBN: 9780198759782

This 'Oxford Handbook' is unique in its field in offering the reader an invaluable source of dental biosciences, while relating the topic to clinical application throughout the book. A real bonus for those starting to practice or who seek to solidify their understanding with the latest knowledge for further qualifications.

The book enters its second edition, edited and rewritten by Hugh Devlin and Rebecca Craven, Professor of Restorative Dentistry and a Senior Consultant in Dental Public Health, respectively. They have used their vast experience in teaching to present the topic using an array of diagrams, tables and short paragraphs that combine to produce a memorable read.

It is an easy to navigate book, making it an excellent reference, with thirteen tabbed and well-defined chapters. The book begins with the first three chapters focusing on the oral cavity, its surrounding structures and their function. The embryology and stages of tooth

formation are neatly displayed, highlighting the possible developmental disorders and where exactly they arise. The intricate mechanisms of speech and swallow, as well as the temporomandibular joints are detailed anatomically, making direct links to their pathologic clinical presentations – great for viva exam revision. Tooth decay as a disease process is then explored, with a focus on how the local factors of diet and fluoride have an influence on the rates of decay progression, as well as the latest epidemiological statistics in preventing the disease.

The next and final ten chapters follow a systems-based approach looking into the role the major organs of the body play and also the effects common diseases have on the health of the oral environment. Although more detail on the complex physiology at work can be found in other textbooks, none summarise and integrate the theory as well as this book. With the number of patients with diabetes treated in general practice increasing, a topical chapter on the disease process highlights the complications and treatment strategies, which most would find very useful.

In conclusion, a fine blend of scientific knowledge and comprehensive overview of the dental biosciences has produced a handy guide for the keen practitioner. With references to current literature throughout, it also presents as a compact yet detailed revision source.

**Patrick Steed**

## NHS prescribing of toothpastes and toiletries cost £3.4 million last year



Doctors prescribing of commonly available toothpastes and toiletries cost the NHS £3.4 million last year, according to figures from NHS Digital.

Details of an analysis of the statistics were published in the Sunday Times newspaper on 29 July 2018 showing that numbers of prescriptions for toiletries that most people would buy themselves rose by almost 600% in a decade from 79,000 in 2007 to about 471,000 last year in England.

The data comes from NHS Digital's *Prescription Cost Analysis* report<sup>1</sup> published on 15 March 2018 and the new analysis found that more than two thirds of toiletries prescribed last year were for products with identical names to those available over the counter, including Colgate toothpaste, Neutrogena shampoos, and Ambre Solaire aftersun lotion.

Doctors prescribed just eight tubes of Colgate Total Advanced Toothpaste in 2007 and this rose to 131 in 2014 and in contrast to no prescriptions of Colgate Total Pro Gum Health Daily Mouthwash in 2007, there were 419 prescriptions of the product in 2015.

NHS Digital said it would be inaccurate to directly compare the cost per item with the cost from a supermarket because the prescribed

items came in all sorts of different forms, strengths, and quantities. To compare the net ingredient cost of these to the cost of supermarket bought products would be imprecise.

Earlier this year, NHS England published guidance<sup>2</sup> intended to curb prescriptions for over the counter medicines with the aim of freeing up to almost £100 million for frontline care each year.

Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of the Royal College of GPs, said: 'GPs are expert medical professionals, and being able to correctly identify and prescribe drugs that are most likely to benefit to our patients is a core part of our training.'

'GPs are acutely aware of how much money prescriptions cost the NHS, and will always encourage patients who can afford to buy "over the counter" products to source them themselves.'

'The College has worked closely with NHS England in recent months to help establish new guidelines identifying over-the-counter medicines that shouldn't be routinely prescribed through the health service.'

John O'Connell, Chief Executive of the TaxPayers' Alliance – the campaigning group seeking to reform taxes and protect taxpayers – said: 'NHS England has made progress on curtailing the dispensing of over-the-counter medicines, but much more needs to be done to stop this wasteful spending.'

1. NHS Digital. Prescription Cost Analysis – England 2017. (15 March 2018). <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/prescription-cost-analysis/prescription-cost-analysis-england-2017> (accessed on 13 August 2018).
2. NHS England. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs (29 March 2018). <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs/> (accessed on 13 August 2018).

