Evidence, it's good for you

Disseminating research evidence: what matters to general dental practitioners?

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Is a peer-reviewed article more like a floret of broccoli or cauliflower? It may be unfair to compare a five-year-old scowling at a pile of vegetables on their plate and a GDP sitting in front of a dense research paper mumbling something to do with 'ivory towers'. However, sometimes the prospect of trying to ingest an unappetising selection of guidelines and statistics means that all the goodness is left on the plate. The authors of this paper acknowledge the gap between current frontline research and 'real life' practice and, like any exasperated parent, muse on how to make the 'vegetables more palatable'.

The observation that it doesn't matter how good the research is if it's not being put into practice seems an entirely sensible one. Therefore, the value of improving so called 'knowledge translation' to improve the uptake of evidence-based practice appears to be a worthwhile endeavour for all parties involved.

This paper represents very much the beginning of a dialogue on how to remove barriers to GDPs accessing the evidence base, ultimately resulting in changes to practice. This small, qualitative study consists of semi-structured interviews with GDPs, discussing a range of learning tools from toolkits to podcasts to social media. The interview transcripts were scrutinised and analysed for emerging themes of what was important to GDPs. Although no single medium is likely to serve the entire dental community, it seems we tend to like things that are social, easy-to-remember, practical and trustworthy.

The main tension discussed in this paper is that between a source of information being both social and trustworthy; in essence, the risk of fake news being present in dental forums. It seems our most favoured methods of 'knowledge translation' involve discussion, interaction and the 'it worked for me' certification from a fellow peer rather than

being decreed from on high. However, as the author discusses, this may make it difficult to implement certain aspects of the evidence base, especially if they're a bit challenging or costly. It also suggests the need to consider the authoritativeness of anecdotal sources, as in other aspects of life.

Overall, this paper will hopefully lead to further work looking to bridge the gap between academia and the trenches of general practice led by both GDPs and academics who want to make research more accessible and applicable. After all, you need to eat your vegetables... they're good for you.

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Watch the study author summarising these research results in their video abstract here: <https://go.nature.com/2Q9kHZt>