



Handbook for dental nurses
J. Bonehill,
C. Roberts,
D. Wincott
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It is refreshing to see a 'handy' sized (18.5 x 12.5 cm) textbook designed for dental nurses. According to the publishers, this book is aimed principally at dental nurses in practice, especially those who are newly qualified, returning to work, or those 'grandparented' in terms of registration.

The book is divided into 20 chapters within just over 200 pages, covering topics pertinent to a variety of dental procedures. The authors are all described as experienced dental nurses whose aim is to provide user friendly information for newly qualified nurses, confirming key facts and acting as an *aide-mémoire*.

Certainly the book's handy size is one of its main advantages as it does manage to provide a wide range of information which can

be easily sourced. Under each chapter heading a brief summary of that topic is provided which outlines its relevance to the dental nurse. The book clearly states that it should not be read from cover to cover but should be used to refresh knowledge on an *ad hoc* basis. To achieve this, the authors have ensured that each chapter contains brief text, lists of tasks/factors etc, and at least one picture or graphic. The majority of chapters also contain top tips and suggested links to other chapters.

I found the layout of the book very good; the variety of photos, drawings and charts supported the text and made the book user friendly. However, a minor criticism is that often lists or paragraphs are interrupted to incorporate a graphic and unfortunately this graphic does not always relate directly to the topic area being discussed. Nevertheless the use of bullet pointed or numbered lists means that the information contained can be easily sourced and I would concur with the authors that this book does refresh previous knowledge perhaps forgotten.

Another useful aspect of the book is the authors' ability to include information within an example layout (eg medical history form) rather than trying to describe what contents

a form should contain. This was also the case with charting as the book displays actual charts to accompany the theory. My concern is that the substance of theory is relatively superficial so I think that this book might be considered too basic by most qualified dental nurses. Certainly the reasoning behind certain tasks and procedures is not explained therefore it does not suggest a depth of understanding is required in order to become a safe and efficient dental care professional. The book does, however, add a contemporary feel by including topics such as dental nurse qualifications and how to improve your working life. Both of these chapters provide up-to-date information that is relevant to any GDC-registered dental nurse and includes elements of evidence based dentistry, reflective practice, indemnity and continuing professional development – all of which are relatively new to the dental nursing profession.

I would suggest that qualified dental nurses using this user friendly book will gain some information but may be frustrated that the information is not more in depth.

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Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention
The British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCD)
Can be downloaded from
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_078742

Prudently, after publishing *Choosing better oral health: an oral health plan for England* in 2005, the Department of Health commissioned BASCD to produce a prevention toolkit as a guide to delivering it.

Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention, published in 2007, is the result. It is targeted at all members of the dental team and has been welcomed and well-received at all levels. I find it clear, simple, unequivocal and practical. The summary section is succinct and easy to read. Its graded evidence base is reassuring for clinicians and oral health promoters who need to be sure that the advice they give to people can be substantiated.

In terms of content there will be few detractors, save a small number for whom fluorosis continues to cause concern. The inclusion of stop smoking advice and information about support for alcohol misuse validates the inherent common risk factor in dental and general health, and corroborates the role of the dental team in promoting healthy lifestyles. Nevertheless, it is important that alongside support for self-help, dental public health continues to work with other approaches to effect change on broader fronts. Perhaps too, a time to reflect on the evidence base for continuing to advise that a particular toothbrushing technique is better than others.

Inevitably, there will be those who question the ability to deliver better oral health within the limits of the dental contract, but this toolkit surely enables the delivery of preventive advice to be both realistic and feasible in general practice. PCTs will need to find imaginative and innovative ways to encourage them to do so.

The opportunity presents itself for health-promoting dental practices in England to be

giving universal, unambiguous advice to all patients, including those with dental disease and those most at risk of developing disease. This toolkit is as valuable to oral health promoters and public health practitioners working to reduce inequalities in oral health with whole communities, half of which may never present themselves to dentists, unless for emergency treatment.

With a recent clear statement from the prime minister that the NHS needs to focus on the prevention of disease, and with the publication of this evidence-based toolkit for prevention, it will be disappointing if dentistry failed to respond.

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