

Book Review

A Guide to Prevention in Dentistry (including The Scientific Basis of Oral Health Education). Edited by Professor Elizabeth Kay. May 2004. 108 Pages. £34.95 (Paperback) ISBN 0904588858, £49.95 (Hardback) ISBN 0904588866

Preventive strategies and the evidence base for advice given by dentists, other members of the dental team and other health professionals continue to evolve. This two-part book aims to assist the preventive orientated dental professional by providing them with the latest thinking on various aspects of prevention. It also aims to advise them on the strength of evidence underpinning the things they do.

I felt 'A guide to prevention in dentistry' was aimed more towards the dentist than members of the dental team. It is split into 8 chapters with some more readable than others. The chapter on smoking cessation advice within general dental practice was especially good. It clearly stated which patients the dentist may be able to help and when referral to a specialist in smoking cessation is indicated. Other chapters also have a similar holistic approach to preventive advice with the chapter on dietary advice covering nutritional recommendations. Advice is also given on barriers that may prevent behavioural changes, equipping the reader with insight into how to approach these. Chapters 7 and 8 cover topical fluoride application and the use of pit and fissure sealant in the permanent dentition of children. These are excellent with precise details regarding use, application and the evidence base behind use.

The format is generally well set out with bullet points giving the chapter in brief at the start and useful summary points to reinforce these at the end. This book was easy to read with the evidence base clearly stated throughout. However, the chapters covering osseointegrated oral implants and the older dentate patient were less succinct, with less bulleted points and diagrams to consolidate the advice given.

The second book, 'The scientific basis of oral health education' aims to educate the undergraduate, post graduate, professions complimentary to dentistry and those involved in general health care, such as school nurses and health visitors, by providing a sound basis for giving information and advice on the main aspects of oral health. The target reader becomes evident with the type of basic dental information which is given. This more applicable to undergraduates and those involved in general health care. Split into twelve chapters, it covers a wide range of topics relevant to dentistry. The appendices cover advice on smoking cessation, guidelines for healthy eating, first aid treatment of the traumatised incisor and these are very useful additional pieces of information. The evidence-based dentistry websites are useful for those requiring further updated information on these topics.

These volumes can be read by both the general dental practitioner and others involved in dental health education. However, if reading from cover to cover some repetition is evident between the books. This is unavoidable given the target audience consisting of dental members (A guide to prevention in dentistry) and professionals giving advice on dental health (The scientific basis of oral health education).

In summary, these books give advice on prevention in dentistry on a number of levels. They contain practical detailed advice which will enable evidence based practice of preventive dentistry to be undertaken confidently.

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