

## Book Reviews

European Journal of Orthodontics 28 (2006) 405  
doi:10.1093/ejo/cj1039

### Communicating in dental practice: stress-free dentistry and improved patient care (2006)

Authors: Ruth Freeman and Gerry Humphris

Publisher: Quintessence Publishing, New Malden, Surrey, UK

Price: £28.00

ISBN: 1-85097-099-8

The book promises, in its foreword, to provide a great insight into key communication skills and techniques of special relevance to the dental team. Though, the target group of this book is all dental personnel, it is also useful for orthodontists. The essence of the sentence 'it is not always what you do, but how you communicate it' is meaningful for an orthodontist, who needs good patient compliance to accomplish successful treatment. The book is easy to read, and the text does not delve into scientific psychological themes. It can be recommended to all members of the orthodontic team.

The most significant contribution for an orthodontist is presented in the chapters describing basic and advanced communication skills. The authors suggest that patients' expectations of care are rising. This makes the mutual understanding in negotiations on treatment options and in reaching informed consent increasingly important. The book presents, in detail, methods of communication such as the importance of appropriate language, active listening, and non-verbal communication. These items are also discussed in connection with special dental situations; difficult or dissatisfied patients and those with special needs, e.g. the elderly or physically or mentally disabled patients. Unfortunately, a common situation in an orthodontic office, i.e. communication with ethnic minorities with language problems, is dealt with too briefly.

As the book is not specifically aimed at orthodontists, issues more relevant to other dental treatment are written with distinction. The problems related to dentally anxious patients are widely described. Preventive health principles and oral health education are both discussed in their own chapters. Although, in orthodontics these issues are often delegated to general dentists or auxiliary personnel, it is necessary for an orthodontist to be aware of possibilities available in securing a patient's oral health during orthodontic treatment.

In the last chapter, the authors discuss professional stress and the risk of 'burn out'. They describe the most common stressful situations in dentistry together with signs of occupation stress and burn out. Furthermore, they introduce strategies on coping with stress factors.

This book deals with a sphere of our professional work, which is sometimes too easily ignored. At its best, it will help us to improve communication and advise on how to minimize problematic situations, complaints, and stress. Even if familiar with some of the issues described in this book, it should be possible to find new ideas on how to improve every day practice and patient well-being.

Terttu Pietilä

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