

Evidence-based dentistry: an introduction

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Evidence-based dentistry combines knowledge with clinical experience.

This book introduces the basic epidemiological and statistical aspects of research to help dental hygienists and dentists as well as students in reading and understanding scientific reports.

The book is a wonderful guide to interpreting published research. It is well written and many chapters are based on a fully published article from a dental journal, and are occasionally supplemented with parts of other papers. These chapters are composed in the same way by addressing the following questions:

- What is the specific aim of the study (identifying the research question)?
- What are the outcome measures or interventions?
- How was the study conducted (assessing aspects of the study design)?
- What are the main results and how do we interpret them?
- How good is the evidence?
- What does the study contribute to the dental (hygiene) practice?

These questions form a structured approach to reading the research articles and it trains the reader to address an article in this manner.

The intention of the authors is to illustrate research methods and statistical ideas through articles and they succeed very well.

The authors do not give details on how to perform statistical tests and analyses. They focus on the interpretation of the results of the analysis.

Chapter 1 explains what evidence-based dentistry is and how to practice it. In chapters 2 and 3, the descriptive research is presented either by counting them or measuring something on people/objects. Chapter 4 addresses comparing groups of people by using the previously discussed concepts. Chapter 5 discusses assessing the effectiveness of (new) treatments and chapter 6 covers identifying risk factors for and causes of disease. Chapter 7 describes how to assess the efficacy of tests that detect disease. In the just mentioned chapters, prevalence (or cross-sectional) studies, randomized trials, cohort studies and case-control studies are covered. In chapter 8, the contribution of the different types of study to the evidence base for dentistry are taken into account. The important aspects of a study design are discussed. An introduction to systematic reviews is dealt with in chapter 9.

Many chapters end with key points and an exercise and questions (answers are given!).

At the end of the book a reading list is given for those who want to learn more about research methodology.

I highly recommend the book for undergraduate dental hygiene students even for those living in non-English-speaking countries.

Instructors will find the book very useful as a resource because of its systematic approach.

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