

Dentists' relationships with patients and colleagues

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REFERENCES

- FDI dental ethics manual
- ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct

Dentists and patients

- Respect and equal treatment
- Communication and consent
- Decision-making for incompetent patients
- Confidentiality
- Uncooperative patients
- Financial restraints on treatment

Respect and equal treatment

- Discrimination
- Human equality
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),
 - “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Respect and equal treatment

- American Dental Association: Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct:
 - dentists have been told not to “refuse to accept patients into their practice or deny dental service to patients because of the patient’s race, creed, color, sex or national origin”

Respect and equal treatment

- The FDI International Principles of Ethics for the Dental Profession asserts the dentist’s right “to decline to treat a patient, except for the provision of emergency care....”

- Whether or not a dentist has the right to refuse to treat a patient, compassion is a value each dentist should have.
- Compassion will breed trust

- ### Terminating relationship with patient
- Dentist moving/stopping practice
 - Pt unwilling or unable to pay for services
 - Dislike of pt and dentist for each other
 - Pt not complying with dentist's recommendations

 - dentists should not abandon patients whose care they have undertaken.

- ### Terminating relationship with patient
- ADA's Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct states: "Once a dentist has undertaken a course of treatment, the dentist should not discontinue that treatment without giving the patient adequate notice and the opportunity to obtain the services of another dentist. Care should be taken that the patient's oral health is not jeopardised in the process."

- ### Infectious patients
- According to the FDI's Policy Statement on Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection and other Blood Borne Infections, "Patients with HIV and other blood borne infections should not be denied oral health care solely because of their infections."

- ### Infectious patients
- FDI's policy statement recommends that "universal infection control procedures should be employed for all patients irrespective of their health status" in order to prevent transmission of infectious diseases ...

- ### Decision-making for incompetent patients
- Parent/ grandparent/ guardian

 - Dentist's role
 - Pt's best interest vs pt's preferences

Uncooperative patients

- Fearful children
 - Bad experience
- Uncooperative adults
 - Neglect oral health
 - Cancel/don't show up to appointments
- Encourage change of behaviour
- Warn pt they may have to find another dentist
 - Give adequate notice
 - Help them find another dentist if necessary

Financial restraints

- dentists are generally not required, either by law or by professional regulations, to provide care to those who cannot afford it, except in an emergency,
- but they have a responsibility to consider how to meet their needs

Financial restraints

- The following can help reduce financial burden for some patients:
 - Accepting insurances that provide compensation below the rate charged by the dentist
 - allowing patients to pay over an extended period
 - reducing or eliminating fees for some patients

- Ethical and professional aspects of dentistry always take precedence over economic ones;
- The dentist must not unduly influence patients or limit the information necessary for patients to make informed decisions;
- The standard of care should be the same for all patients regardless of the means of reimbursement;
- Dentists should put pts welfare first

Be a professional

- Dentistry is a profession, but a dentist is not necessarily a professional unless he strives to be
- Respect patients for their unique needs and values
- Place patients' interests first and foremost (with only rare, legitimate exceptions)

A professional ...

- Has integrity
- Is honest
- Is competent
- Strives to improve and effect improvement in the profession
- Actively supports professional organizations
- Is concerned about conduct & perceptions of conduct
- A professional is *ETHICAL*

- Becoming a professional is a lifelong process of
 - consistent behavior
 - affirming the principles of your beliefs.
- Your conduct in a professional capacity ultimately establishes your status as a professional
- Strive to be a true professional..
 - make a significant contribution to dentistry, society, and most importantly, the patients you serve

DENTISTS AND SOCIETY

- ### Dentists & the community
- The essence of every health profession is service above self
 - Dentist's primary obligation is service to the patient
 - Dentists have an obligation to use their knowledge, skills, and experience to improve the oral health of the public
 - They also have the obligation to keep their knowledge and skills current.

- ### Dentists & the community
- Dentists have a broad responsibility to their community, they have roles to play in:
 - public health,
 - Health education,
 - environmental protection,
 - laws affecting the health or well-being of the community

- ### Commercial companies
- dentist should not rely on manufacturer's representations about a health-related product's safety and efficacy, but has an obligation to investigate the accuracy of such claims and verify that they are founded on accepted scientific knowledge or research

- ### Resource allocation
- Needs vs desires for healthcare services and availability of resources to provide these services
 - Government level (macro):
 - Budget allocated ..
 - decide which procedures provided at no charge
 - Remuneration for healthcare workers...

Resource allocation

- Institutional level (meso)
 - Hospital, clinics, dental offices
 - Which services to provide..
- Individual patient level (micro)
 - Dentists decide which tx to recommend (simple/complex)
 - Whether referral is needed
 - i.e dentist should consider the 'need' of the pt, not 'desire', because he has an obligation to the society and other pts who are in 'need' of tx

Responsibility to society

- FDI International Principles of Ethics for the Dental Profession states: "The dentist should...support and promote accepted measures to improve the oral health of the public."
- Allocation of resources by avoiding inefficient and wasteful practices
- *Allocate resources to those who 'need' it*

DENTISTS AND COLLEAGUES

Dentists and colleagues

- The FDI International Code of Dental Ethics states that dentists "should refer for advice and/or treatment any patient requiring a level of competence beyond that held."
- Cooperation between dentists is necessary to maximise patient benefit

Unethical relationship between dentists

- Paying or receiving any fee or any other consideration solely to procure the referral of a patient ('fee-splitting')
- Luring patients from colleagues

Teachers and dental students

- Dental teachers/instructors' attitudes and behaviour towards pts influence dental students
- Teachers should not encourage unethical practice such as providing treatments that meet the students' educational needs rather than the patients' clinical needs

Reporting unsafe or unethical practices

- ADA: "Dentists shall be obliged to report to the appropriate reviewing agency... instances of gross or continual faulty treatment by other dentists"

ADA

- Patients should be informed of their present oral health status without disparaging comment about prior services.
- A difference of opinion as to preferred treatment should not be communicated to the patient in a manner which would unjustly imply mistreatment

ADA

WRITING REPORTS

Report

- A.M. is a 12 year old male who came to the dental clinic c/o
- He is fit and healthy..
- Clinical examination revealed...
- Radiographs were ordered (periapical/bitewing/..) – describe findings
- Explain procedure: Tooth # had caries on the occlusal surface which was restored with composite. ...