

What is eviDent?

eviDent Dental Practice Based Research Network (DPBRN) is an exciting joint venture between the ADAVB and the Cooperative Research Centre for Oral Health Science (CRC-OHS) at the Melbourne Dental School.

While there are numerous evidence-based systems and resources to assist medical practitioners to adopt improved quality and safety measures in their practices, no equivalent support systems exist for Australian dentists.

Science transfer

Research is fundamental to building our knowledge base, yet there is often a disconnection between research outcomes and the realities of patient care. This is due to the fact that most dental research is conducted within a university setting. Using the results of a number of studies published within the medical literature, it has been estimated that it takes on average 17 years to turn 14% of original research findings into changes in clinical care that benefits a patient (Balas E & Boran S. Managing Clinical Knowledge for Health Care. In: Yearbook of Medical Informatics 2000:65-70).

A recent publication by Gilbert et al, in JADA 2008;139(1):74-81, reviewed the structure and function of the University of Alabama practice-based research network, which includes practitioner researchers in seven US states and three Scandinavian countries. The authors concluded that practitioners from diverse settings were partnering with fellow practitioners and academics to improve daily clinical practice and meet the needs of clinicians and their patients. They went on to state that Practice Based Research Networks can improve clinical practice by engaging dentists in the development and implementation of studies that are of direct interest to them and their patients. This active engagement of the profession offers the potential to significantly improve the science transfer from research projects to clinical practice.

The Network

eviDent will train eviDent members in research skills and engage them in activities and projects within their own practices that will improve the evidence base for dental care.

Most dentists work within isolated clinical settings with little opportunity for clinical benchmarking. It would be of great benefit to the profession and community at large if information could be obtained from the practice environment.

Through eviDent, clinical and community based health care questions can be answered and translated into provision of services in accordance with best practice and quality improvement guidelines. In addition this information can be utilized to guide appropriate policy initiatives.

Within the context of quality assurance, practice accreditation and practitioner revalidation a DPBRN would provide dentists with the resources to meet the burgeoning requirements set by the regulating bodies.

eviDent will draw on the experience and insight of Associate (practitioner) Investigators to identify and frame research questions whose answers can improve the delivery of dental services within the practice setting. By linking these questions with rigorous research methods, the DPBRN can produce research findings that are immediately relevant to the clinician and, potentially, more easily assimilated into everyday practice.

Research Projects & Funding

The primary objective of each eviDent study is to strengthen the knowledge base for clinical decision-making and policy setting. This will be done by testing particular approaches and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies for the prevention, management and treatment of oral diseases and conditions.

The first two approved research projects relate to implant complications and

hypomineralisation. Further details about these will appear in future newsletters. Proposals for new projects will be relevant to oral health care and, wherever possible, involve educating general practitioners and practice staff, and will therefore help build knowledge and research capacity of participants.

Research will occur in two broad areas:

1. Research Projects about Policy Issues
2. Research Projects about Clinical Issues

The ADAVB has committed \$100,000 to start an investment fund to generate future earnings that can be assigned to support research activities, and both the ADAVB and CRC-OHS provide significant amounts of in kind support for eviDent.

Research projects will be able to make applications for National Health and Medical Research Council and Australian Dental Research Foundation funding with the assistance of Chief Investigators (Melbourne Dental School academic staff).

Research projects to be conducted by eviDent are expected to cost from \$10,000 to \$100,000, depending on the scale and scope of the research design.

Possible funding sources include various foundations and trusts plus donations for particular projects or a general 'pot' of funds for eviDent. **MQ**

Further information

Members interested in eviDent should contact:

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Recent Ethics Case

During the Branch Council meeting on 7 December 2009, consideration was given to one ethics matter.

The member in this case was found to have breached the Branch's Code of Ethics, Section 2(2)(e) of By-Law 2. Having declined to meet with the President (with a Community Relations Officer present) to receive remedial advice and a direct reprimand, and having previously been suspended from the rights and privileges of membership for a period of three months, Council resolved that the Member be expelled from Membership of the Branch.

Various other ethical matters remain on the Council agenda, and further reports will be provided as these cases reach their conclusion.

All members are urged to read their copy of the Code of Ethics and to note their obligations under this By-Law. A copy of the Code is available at www.adavb.net in the 'My ADAVB' (Members only) area under Document Exchange/ADAVB Rules and By-Laws. If you require a replacement copy of this By-Law, please contact the Branch office on 8825 4600.