

Empower the People!

Dentists have been viewed for almost a hundred years as the professionals responsible for patient Oral Health. If a patient's oral health deteriorated, excuses would be made for the reason – usually a condition beyond the dentist's control. Blame has been placed on weak enamel, dry mouth, or directed at the patient for poor flossing, changed hormones, broken appointments etc.

How do we Diagnose and Treat?

The diagnoses and treatment recommendations for patients has not changed much over many decades. Dentists and hygienists base their protocols on school teaching, clinical experience, their level of interaction with others in the field, and knowledge from CE courses or reading. What if their suggestions are incorrect?

In 2002 dentistry was introduced to the concept of Evidence Based evaluation. To many, this was a new concept and volunteers were enrolled to spread the word. They called us Evidence Based Champions, and trained us at an intensive course hosted by Proctor and Gamble and the ADA.

To Change Ideas

In my role as an E. B. Champion I discovered great difficulty changing opinions. Remineralization was a foreign idea to many, there was general dismissal of the concept that dentistry should pay attention to nutrition, and an almost universal outrage to suggest that biofilm could be healthy or question the efficacy of flossing. Talking about these “different” ideas made my peers at study clubs very uncomfortable.

Now it is the turn AAOSH to spread the news about Oral Health. AAOSH must first determine what are the most effective diagnostic tools, protocols and treatments to recommend? AAOSH must then determine how they will reach health care professionals from all disciplines and spread a consistent message that allows patients to enjoy oral health.

Transfer of Power

AAOSH must transfer power to the people. It is encouraging to see that this was recently achieved in Cairo – maybe we can copy some of their ideas at AAOSH!

The 2001 E.B. symposium shed light on the fact it was time to evaluate and review protocols for Oral Health. Now AAOSH must be creative and use modern technology to disperse accurate information that empowers the public, helps Health Care Professionals and creates protocols that effectively sustain ultimate Oral Health!