

Field Study of the Evidence-Based Dentistry Activity of Predoctoral Students and Preceptors at Off-Campus Dental Offices

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INTRODUCTION

Predoctoral dental students learn and apply evidence-based dentistry (EBD) during training in an accredited dental school. Fourth-year students at the Dental College of Georgia are also required to practice for four weeks, away from the dental school, at public health, private, hospital, or Federally Qualified Health Center dental practices to treat patients under a dental preceptor's supervision.

Would the students or preceptors exhibit any evidence-based dentistry behaviors treating patients at off-campus dental sites?

Evidence-based dentistry integrates...

- ✓ the dentist's clinical expertise,
- ✓ the patient's needs and preferences,
- ✓ and the most current, clinically relevant evidence.

METHODS

Eight students and eight preceptors were interviewed privately about EBD activity at preceptor offices and were asked to:

- define evidence-based dentistry;
- recall the evidence-based dentistry process;
- recall the use of evidence outside of the patient dental record and how the outside evidence was obtained;
- recall how the outside evidence affected patient care.

Interview transcripts were transcribed, de-identified, and analyzed by an educational researcher.

RESULTS

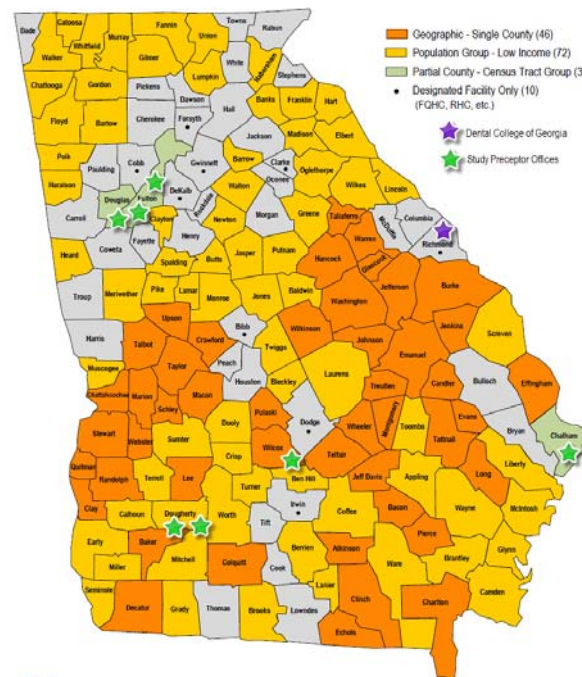
- Both students and preceptors are aware of evidence-based dentistry, but most had difficulty recalling the formal definition or the formal process of evidence-based dentistry.
- Most patient cases did not require applying the evidence-based dentistry process.
- When looking for evidence, most described going online, consulting print textbooks or asking colleagues.



CONCLUSIONS

- Evidence-based dentistry activity in public health settings is infrequent.
- Evidence is consulted when a case is outside the clinical expertise of the student or preceptor.
- Students and preceptors are not systematically consulting PubMed or the American Dental Association's *ADA Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry*™ site <http://ebd.ada.org/en/>.
- Sample size of the field study is small.
- Dental medicine librarians should reinforce the evidence-based dentistry process in the curriculum and encourage wider use of PubMed within the evidence-based dentistry process.
- Practicing dentists may need continuing education to learn the practical application of evidence-based dentistry.

GEORGIA DENTAL PROVIDERS SHORTAGE MAP WITH FIELD STUDY SITES



STUDENT COMMENTS

- “[EBD is] dentistry supported with current research.”
- One of the answers...was [found in] one of the doctor's textbooks...”



PRECEPTOR COMMENTS

- “[EBD] is peer-reviewed journals and articles...”
- “[EBD] would be practicing dentistry...within the confines of what the literature suggests.”
- “First experience and mainly CE. See, techniques change. Materials change....they might not use the same composite now than they did when I was in school.”
- “We will search for evidence when it comes to a medically compromised patient.”
- “...with all the students...I...have them talk me through their thought process. What technique would they use...”
- “If...there was something I was confused about...I...would consult a textbook or...the web...and PubMed...in order to get the answer.”
- “I look at the literature, and then I am calling all of my colleagues.”

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