

An audit of the quality of referral letters received by the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Dublin Dental School and Hospital

Abstract

One hundred consecutive referral letters, sent by dental practitioners to the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Dublin Dental School and Hospital, were audited in terms of quality. The audit was based on the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) recommendations of 1998. The audit demonstrated that in general referral letters required modification and did not give the clinician the required information. This paper sets out the results of the audit and suggests a template that should be used for future referrals.

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Factors influencing the provision of removable partial dentures by dentists in Ireland

Précis

As the number of partially dentate patients increases, it is important to determine factors that influence acceptance of removable partial dentures (RPDs). This study illustrates current trends in the provision of RPDs in Ireland, and factors that influence clinical practice in the management of partially dentate patients.

Abstract

Factors influencing clinical treatment of partially dentate patients are varied, and there is a need to identify factors influencing success in the provision of removable partial dentures. The aim of this study was to assess the attitudes of general dental practitioners (GDPs) in Ireland towards tooth replacement and use of RPDs, in partially dentate older adults. The sample frame was the Register of Dentists in Ireland; data were also collected from a sample of dentists practising under NHS regulations in Northern Ireland. Validated questionnaires were sent to all dentists on the Register of Dentists in the Republic of Ireland, and dentists working under NHS regulations registered with the Central Services Agency in Northern Ireland. Content of the questionnaire included details of the dentist themselves, their dental practice and the profile of partial denture provision. They were also asked to give their views on factors influencing the success or failure of an RPD, the process of providing RPDs and their attitudes to RPD provision. A total of 1,143 responses were received, a response rate of 45%. A mean number of 61 RPDs per annum were provided, with 75% of dentures provided being acrylic based. Respondents indicate their belief that cobalt-chromium based dentures had a longer prognosis than acrylic dentures, but less than half (46%) claim to design the frameworks themselves. Patients' attitudes are considered influential in the success of RPD provision, and their influence on appearance is considered the most important factor influencing success. The most important factors influencing failure are: the patient not requesting a denture; an RPD restoring unbounded saddles; and, lower RPDs. Although considered important, approximately 60% of the sample do not routinely organise follow-up appointments for patients provided with RPDs. The fee structures in the DTSS and DTBS are considered a barrier to quality in the provision of partial dentures.

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