

Conflicts of Interest in Research: Is Clinical Decision-Making Compromised?

An Opinion Paper

Shawn Abidi, D.D.S.

Richard D. Bebermeyer, D.D.S., M.B.A.

Introduction

Currently, there is a perception that ethical principles are eroding and that research data can be biased. These research outcomes, biased or not, are used for clinical decision-making in the evidence-based practice. Relationships among practitioners, investigators, patients, and the healthcare industry can be affected when commercialism taints research outcomes and/or clinical



Abidi



Bebermeyer

Dr. Abidi is an assistant professor, Department of Diagnostic Sciences, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Dental Branch (UTDB). In addition to practice leadership responsibilities, the author teaches diagnostic sciences, including in the Treatment Planning Clinic, Assessment Clinic, and courses such as Introduction to Clinic and Laser Dentistry (elective) at UTDB.

Dr. Bebermeyer is professor and chairman, Department of Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Dental Branch. The department is responsible for curriculum on ethics, professionalism, and jurisprudence, among other restorative dentistry and biomaterials courses for predoctoral dental students and general dentistry residents.

Abstract

Lack of transparency in funded research can compromise clinical decision-making in an evidence-based practice. Transparency can be defined as full disclosure of all financial assistance and support to authors and investigators. There is a perception that ethical principles are eroding and that research data can be biased due to conflicts of interest. These research outcomes biased or not, are used for clinical decision-making in the evidence-based practice. One suggested solution to this common ethical dilemma is to continue the dialogue on transparency in research and to create oversight bodies which include representatives from business and industry, private practice, academia, and research. There is increasing evidence of the need for more ethics education at all levels.

KEY WORDS:

Ethics, professional misconduct, bioethics, conflict of interest, research personnel, ethics committees, evidence-based practice (EBP), research disclosure, Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)

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Fluoride Varnish: The Top Choice for Professionally Applied Fluoride

Ryan L. Quock, D.D.S.,
Donna P. Warren-Morris, R.D.H., M.Ed.

Introduction

As the dental profession continues to lead the way in providing quality health care in the United States, it must address the challenge still posed by dental caries. Significantly, dental caries is the most common chronic childhood disease in this country (1). Dentistry has the unique privilege and responsibility of treating dental caries, and prevention is the centerpiece of any strategy for treating caries. Of course, discussion of dental caries prevention inevitably turns to the success of fluoride, which has been proven to reduce the incidence of dental caries and favorably alter the progression of existing carious activity (2). Fluoride aids in both protecting tooth structure from acid attack and in remineralizing affected teeth.



Quock



Warren-Morris

Dr. Quock is an assistant professor, Department of Restorative Dentistry & Biomaterials, University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston.

Ms. Warren-Morris is an associate professor, Department of Periodontics, University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to Dr. Ryan Quock, Department of Restorative Dentistry & Biomaterials, University of Texas Dental Branch, 6516 M. D. Anderson Blvd., Ste. 493, Houston, TX 77030; Phone: (713) 500-4276; Fax: (713) 500-4108; E-mail: Ryan.Quock@uth.tmc.edu.

Abstract

Although various modes of delivery for professionally applied fluoride exist, one form has emerged that combines caries prevention efficacy with safety and versatility. The American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs recommends fluoride varnish as the only professionally applied fluoride for moderate to high risk patients of all age groups. In addition to demonstrating effectiveness equivalent to fluoride gels, fluoride varnish provides improved safety and acceptability. Furthermore, fluoride varnish has shown promise in preventing dental caries in special groups, such as orthodontic patients and the elderly.

KEY WORDS:

fluoride, fluoride varnish, professionally applied fluoride

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