

Clinical Decision Support Chairside Tools for Evidence-Based Dental Practice

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Evidence-based clinical decision support (EB-CDS) tools designed for chairside use, help support the implementation of Evidence-Based Dentistry. EB-CDS tools organize available evidence and risk factors in order to facilitate clinical decision-making as well as to enhance rapid and effective transfer of knowledge to the patient at the point of care. Gingival recession, root exposure, caries, dental sealants, decay prevention and topical fluoride guides are presented and discussed. The Assess-Advise-Decide Approach, described in this article, better enables patients to determine which course of action is in line with their preferences and values.

Key Words: clinical decision support tools, evidence-based dental practice, periodontics, gingival recession, root exposure, caries, dental sealants, decay prevention, topical fluoride

The evidence-based dentistry (EBD) approach offers many advantages for clinicians and patients (see [Sidebar 1](#)), yet its implementation chairside, at the point-of-care, remains challenging. Practical and effective aids are needed to help clinicians apply the most current scientific evidence to clinical decision making and therapy. Evidence-based clinical decision support (EB-CDS) tools designed for chairside use will support implementation of EBD. This article briefly reviews concepts important to understanding

EBD, describes a useful approach to clinical decision making, and introduces 3 EB-CDS tools for clinical practice.

CONCEPTS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED DENTISTRY

The definition and description of evidence-based medicine offered by Sackett et al¹ is an appropriate context for better understanding evidence-based dental practice (see [Sidebar 2](#)). The American Dental Association (ADA) has applied Sackett et al's description of evidence-based medicine to dentistry as: *An approach to oral health care that requires the judicious integration of systematic assessments of clinically relevant scientific evidence, relating to the patient's oral and medical condition and history, with the dentist's clinical expertise and the patient's treatment needs and preferences.*²

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SIDEBAR I. The Evidence-Based Dental (EBD) Practice Advantage

ADA American Dental Association®

America's leading advocate for oral health



The Evidence-Based Dental (EBD) Practice Advantage

You

- Gain improved clinical decision-making capability
- Achieve greater confidence in treatment planning
- More opportunity to provide treatment choices selected for minimizing risks of harm and maximizing treatment safety
- Greater satisfaction derived from creating customized treatment plans based on the powerful combination of stronger scientific evidence, clinician judgment and experience, as well as patient preferences and values
- Increased day-to-day enjoyment working with a happier team motivated by working to a higher standard that puts the patient first in the dental care process.
- More peace of mind that comes with doing the right thing



Your Patients

- More trust and confidence in their doctor and his or her practice
- Greater incentive to invest in quality oral health care
- Increased pride from being a patient of a community thought leader and distinctive practice

Your Dental Team and Practice

- Increased staff confidence, pride, trust and personal satisfaction.
- Enhanced recognition in the community and with peers as a thought leader practice
- Greater opportunity to conserve practice financial resources by enabling wiser decisions in product and equipment selection.



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