



Antibiotic Abuse- A Public Health Nightmare

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Letter to Editor

Antibiotics usage in dentistry is being guided by the dentists' personal knowledge and experience rather than evidence based guidelines [1]. Indications for the prescription have been clearly defined which need to be followed by the dentists to avoid antibiotic resistance among the patients. A lack of consistency in the antibiotic prescription pattern among dentists and overall low adherence to the professional guidelines is being observed. Prescription of antibiotics in an improper way is one of the major causes of antibiotic resistance [2]. Microbial resistance to antibiotics is an increasingly important public health issue. Literature provides evidence of inadequate prescribing practices by dentists, due to a number of factors ranging from inadequate knowledge to social factors [3]. Majority of the infections can be treated effectively by surgical means alone and there is no necessity for an antibiotic course to be prescribed. Dentists prescribe large quantities of antibiotics in outpatient settings, and it is better to understand the reasons for the variability in antibiotic prescription and identify areas of possible intervention and improvement [4]. Provision of training in their use and continuous reinforcement should be an integral part of our response to antibiotic abuse by the dentists. The evidence based dentistry approach will ensure dentists are updated on newer trends in antibiotic prophylaxis guidelines for their patients [5]. The use of antibiotics in dentistry is unavoidable but strategies need to be developed to ensure there is safe prescription of antibiotics to the patients. Proper dosing regimens and professional prescribing practices by dentists should be supplemented with general public being educated on the importance of restricting the use of antibiotics to only limited cases having severe infection. Patients with dental problems have become inured to prescribing antibiotics for a range of medical complaints.

So in conclusion it is recommended that continuous education programs need to be conducted on antibiotic prescriptions for the dentists to keep themselves update. It is the duty of the dentists to educate the patients the importance of taking the antibiotics in the right manner as prescribed by him and display patient education materials in their clinics and institutions. Prescribing antibiotics over the counter also have to be avoided. An evidence based approach has to be used by the dentists at the level of the clinic and follow all the guidelines for antibiotic prescription to aid in reducing the microbial resistance to antibiotics which is a public health nightmare.

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