

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	General Practitioners' attitudes towards the management of dental conditions and use of antibiotics in these consultations: a qualitative study
AUTHORS	Cope, Anwen; Wood, Fiona; Francis, Nick A.; Chestnutt, Ivor

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Tim Newton King's College London, UK
REVIEW RETURNED	05-Jun-2015

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>this manuscript describes a qualitative study of the views of General Medical Practitioners concerning attendance by individuals with dental problems in general medical practice. The study is reported in line with COREQ guidance on the reporting of qualitative research.</p> <p>The study has been well designed and conducted. The sample has a good degree of variability in key aspects likely to be related to the phenomenon under study.</p> <p>I found the study well conducted. The findings are clearly described. The study limitations have been clearly discussed. I suggest acceptance without modification.</p>
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REVIEWER	Nahid Ashri King Saud University Saudi Arabia
REVIEW RETURNED	18-Jun-2015

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The number of gps included is very little, and it does not reflect the title it should be mentioned in the title that this study is conducted in Wales, UK, so at least it is reflective of what they actually did There was no mentioning of statistics, so I do not know how they calculated the presented data</p>
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REVIEWER	Susan Bissett Newcastle University, UK
REVIEW RETURNED	21-Jul-2015

GENERAL COMMENTS	This paper highlights the issue of antibiotics being prescribed for dental problems by general (medical) practitioners. The authors
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	<p>state that clinical guidelines recommend that surgical intervention by a dental practitioner should be the first line treatment for acute dental conditions, but this largely depends on the aetiology and diagnosis of the dental condition; wherein the challenge lies for the general (medical) practitioner. Antibiotics are not always issued and it is clear from the paper that GPs are in a difficult position, whatever their management choice. However, despite this, the indiscriminate use of antibiotics cannot be overlooked and this paper correctly concludes with the suggestion that interventions are needed to support patients in accessing appropriate (dental) care when experiencing dental problems.</p> <p>The title was clear and the contents fit the title well. The aims were also clear, and these were fulfilled in the paper. The methodology was appropriate with clear effort to include participants from a variety of settings (maximum variation sampling). The study is reported according to COREQ. Results from qualitative data cannot always be applied to different settings but the authors have acknowledged this limitation. The conclusions are accurately drawn from the data.</p> <p>A strength of the paper was the way that the methodology was described, which was written in a refreshingly clear and comprehensive way.</p> <p>A weakness was that contrary to the claim that this is the first study to explore attitudes towards the management of dental problems in general practice. The topic of management of dental problems in general (medical) practice has been reported previously in BMJ Open: Bissett SM, Stone KM, Rapley T, et al. BMJ Open 2013;3:e002192. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2012-002192 and this paper should therefore be referenced and discussed briefly.</p> <p>Overall, the paper is of a high quality and covers an interesting and relevant topic. Other than the above correction, I am happy to support its publication.</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer 1

We would like to thank the reviewer for the time spent reviewing the manuscript and for their compliments on the quality of the paper.

Reviewer 2

Whilst we acknowledge that the number of GPs is small in comparison to the sample size that would typically be used in a quantitative study, this study aimed to examine the attitudes of GPs towards the management of dental conditions and use of antibiotics in these consultations using qualitative techniques. Such approaches value the richness of narrative over the quantity of data collected and therefore employ smaller samples. Within the study maximum variation sampling was used in order to ensure a wide range of perspectives were obtained, and criteria for judging when saturation was reached were stipulated prior to the beginning of data collection. Continuing to interview participants beyond the point of saturation would have added little to the findings of the paper and would have been ethically questionable. We are therefore confident that the results represent the range of views held by the interviewed clinicians. However we recognise that findings may not be generalisable to all practitioners and this is stated on pg3, bullet point 3 and pg14, paragraph 2.

We have stated in both the abstract and the body of the manuscript that the study was conducted in Wales, UK. We feel that the findings of the paper are likely to be of interest to practitioners and other readers outside Wales and therefore, we would prefer to leave the title as it is. However we would be

happy to add, 'in the UK' should the editorial team feel that this would be preferable. The study employed thematic analysis as its sole analytical approach and therefore statistics, descriptive or otherwise, are not presented.

Reviewer 3

We gratefully acknowledge the comments of the reviewer and would like to thank them for bring the study of Bissett et al to our attention. The paper highlighted by the reviewer focuses on the knowledge and attitudes regarding the links between diabetes and periodontal disease held by medical and dental professionals and their patients. We have therefore clarified in the manuscript that our paper is the first to explore the attitudes of GPs towards the use of antibiotics in the management of acute dental problems in general practice, and have referenced the study by Bissett et al as appropriate.