

Paradigm Shift in the Dental Practice Laying More Emphasis on Dental Records

Ana Erdelja,

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

ABSTRACT

A document that comprises information about the past serving as an evidence, especially an account kept in writing or some other permanent form is known as a record. These records can be used in research, administrative, financial, quality assurance, forensic, and medicolegal issues. A dental record can be explained as the detailed document comprising of a chief complaint, history of the present and past illnesses, clinical examination, diagnosis, treatment planning, and the management of a patient. It summarizes all the information regarding provision of dental care services, which includes patient and business records including billing, claims forms, laboratory charge, scheduling, and drug records, etc. Dental practitioners must be aware of the legal elements, as there are greater possibilities of dentists encountering medicolegal cases, particularly in the context of patient empowerment and increased desire for improved esthetics. The important application of maintaining dental records supports in identification of human remains through dental records, resolving malpractice issues, odontolegal investigation, and providing assistance at the crime scene, in cases of any suspected abuse. To present forensic dental evidence, an expert on the basis of dental records can present scientific evidence and their expert testimony in the court of law. The dilemma always remains as to how much a dentist in India knows about the importance of dental records and its implication in the court of justice. This article is an attempt to extract knowledge for the same from dental practitioners. Records serve as an important adjunct in the lawsuit. Written record, comprising of medical and dental history, treatment records, radiographs, photographs, casts, and patient models are the various types of dental record that need to be stored. Keeping the above requirement as the baseline, this study was conducted to assess, analyze the knowledge, and the awareness among oral health professionals in India about odontolegal practice. This study was conducted to evaluate the knowledge and the awareness on odontolegal practice with more emphasis on significance of maintaining dental records by the oral health professionals.

Note: This work is partially presented at 16th International Conference on Modern Dental Health & Treatment, September 21-22, 2018, Philadelphia, USA