

Seeing things that others don't



As dentists treating patients, we have a duty and responsibility to care for the oral and dental health of our patients. We need to listen to their concerns, have an understanding of their dental problems, and provide comprehensive dental care to help them sustain and maintain their oral health.

This dental knowledge should be evidence based. In order for patients to make decisions on their oral and dental health, they need to be given all options for treatment, the advantages and disadvantages, the risks and the benefits, and the opportunity to consider these options for 24 hours in order to sign their informed consent sheets.

This dental knowledge should be based on scientific literature, studies, and accepted guidelines and recommendations for treatment. This includes Cochrane reviews, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses.

Observations

However, there are those doctors and dentists that have noticed things in their patients and pieced together parts of a puzzle to diagnose new diseases, which led to further research for the benefit of their patients, dentistry, medicine, and thus human kind.

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This thought process begins as an observation, such as in the case of Dr Bill Klausmier, the orthodontist who in the late 1960s, noticed the swollen gingivae of his post-orthodontic young patients. He advised these patients to use a hydrogen peroxide mouthwash inside their orthodontic retainers to heal their swollen gums.

When he reviewed these patients, not only was the swelling significantly reduced, but

the teeth were whiter. This led to a quest to understand the alternative mechanism that initiated hydrogen peroxide to whiten teeth.

This knowledge was shared to other dentists, which led to the first research study undertaken in 1989 by Van Haywood and Harald Hayman, and published by Quintessence. Thus, millions of patients have benefitted from his ideas, thoughts and research, and as a result have whiter teeth, and are happier with the aesthetics of their smile than they otherwise would have been.

Gaining insights

Gary Klein has written a fascinating book, entitled *Seeing what others don't. The remarkable ways we gain insights*. It examines the way we gain insights into situations and observations, looking specifically at our mindsets.

A mindset is a belief that orientates the way we handle situations – the way we sort out what is going on and what we should do. Sometimes we have flashes of insight and notice coincidences, curiosities and connections.

Our mindset helps us to spot these coincidences, such as in the case of Dr Michael Gottlieb, who noticed several of his patients being admitted into hospital with an unusual form of pneumonia, called pneumocystic pneumonia.

After the fifth case, he started to see a pattern and the same symptoms, which led to further investigation. He published his findings in 1981, which turned out to be the first published cases of Aids.

Never events

However, recently, the main concern is patient safety, and ensuring a safety culture at all times in dental and medical procedures (Renton and Master, 2016; Dargue, 2016). Protecting the patient from harm has led to new guidelines being issued, and a discussion about 'never events' and the need for a new approach in dentistry has begun by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and the Royal Colleges.

What is the most common 'never event' in

dentistry? The answer is, extracting the wrong tooth. The second most common never event? Administering a local anaesthetic mandibular block on the wrong side (Renton and Sabbah, 2016).

'Discussions ensure that patients are cared for within a safe environment with dentists undertaking the safest and best treatment'

The CQC definition of moderate harm is a 'moderate increase in the treatment means unplanned return to surgery or a readmission, prolonged episode of care, extra time in hospital or as an outpatient, cancelling of treatments or transfer to another treatment area'.

All these discussions ensure that patients are cared for within a safe environment, with dentists undertaking the safest and best treatment option for the patient. This also applies to aesthetic dentistry and it is important that dentists who dedicate their practice to aesthetic dentistry are aware of these factors for the safety of their patients, their team and themselves during their practicing life.

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Seeing things that others may not see is one of the most powerful skills that you can have, and it can give you the ability to create massive success. I thought about this last night as I watched the movie *The Big Short*. If you haven't seen it yet, it's a great film about the financial crisis of 2008. In a nutshell, back in the early 2000s, there were a ton of crappy mortgage loans handed out to unqualified homebuyers. Michael Burry, an investment fund manager played by Christian Bale, saw signs that these loans would go to go into default soon. And he predicted this waaaaay before anyone else. Seeing What Others Don't is not only the title of new book by Gary Klein, it is also a mantra that can make you successful. Let's deal with the book first and then my assertion. Although I have never met him, I have been a fan of Klein for years. He is a very smart guy [...] How To See What Others Don't (In Order To Increase Your Chances of Success). Paul B. Brown Contributor. Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own. SATURDAY PUZZLE "It's not really a secret that we all see, feel, smell and hear things differently. If you have ever sat through a course in philosophy, you know that our perception of what is "real" is based not on what something actually is, but what we say it is. Which is always incredibly disappointing to a teenager who has come to college to discover the "real" world ("That's it?! That's all there is to it?"