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Writing about treatment planning

The IJED offers potential authors an additional category of manuscript, entitled “Treatment Planning.” Although treatment planning represents a key element in our daily work, we do not receive many submissions for this interesting manuscript category.

When generating a patient’s treatment plan, each step of the plan must be justified by diagnoses or reasons for a specific treatment. A treatment plan that lacks this diagnostic foundation is often missing key components, and important patient concerns and oral health problems may be overlooked and remain untreated. At the conclusion of the examination, the dentist should inform the patient about his or her oral condition. Discussing diagnoses and problems with the patient is part of the process of obtaining informed consent to provide treatment.

The use of risk analysis, prognosis determination, and outcomes assessment in the treatment plan presentation and discussion has allowed our profession to progress from empirically based to evidence-based treatment planning.

Along with that, dental professionals can be expected to move closer to consensus, with recommendations to patients that are more thoughtful, logical, predictable, and consistent. The role of the dentist in presenting the treatment plan is changing from that of final authority in all decisions to that of content expert, educator, and advisor to the patient.¹

The first part of a treatment planning manuscript includes diagnoses and at least three treatment options that have been discussed with the patient. Additionally, the pros and cons of each option need to be briefly explained, including evidence (if available) supporting a specific decision. The agreed-upon option is presented in the second part of the manuscript, including images of the clinical steps and the final outcome. A short discussion is required at the end, which explains the rationale behind the presented treatment option.

Unfortunately, many of us today focus on the presentation of nice clinical images of our “best cases” to present ourselves in the most favorable light. We would like to share and discuss the



foundations of treatments, which are as important as the final outcomes, so that we may all learn and benefit from each other's experience.

If you are interested in contributing in this manuscript category, please feel free to get in touch with us. We will be happy to help you be a future author for the IJED.

Enjoy reading.

Sincerely yours,
Alessandro Devigus

Reference

1. Stefanac SJ, Nesbit SP. *Diagnosis and Treatment Planning in Dentistry*, ed 3. Mosby, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-323-28730-2

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