



Sunnymede Trust oral health manual

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This publication is aimed at health-care workers who may find themselves required to provide oral healthcare in out-of-surgery situations. This would include clinical officers, medical aid workers, nurses and midwives.

As a teaching support document for medically trained personnel, this manual is very well placed to be a valuable resource. It will also be useful as a 'do it yourself' reference guide in areas with limited or no access to oral health specialists.

Opinion is often divided about the merits of different methods, such as cleaning teeth with a stick or a toothbrush, and seating patients on a chair rather than using a table, which many consider ergonomically more appropriate. This manual takes a pragmatic approach, suggesting basic and adaptable solutions that emphasise sound practice while trying to avoid prescriptive methods that may prove impossible if resources are limited. The area of cross infection control is rightly more

insistent and stresses the importance of good procedural discipline in even the most basic setting.

The book firstly introduces oral anatomy, dental disease and oral health promotion with a focus on education and prevention. It goes on to deliver practical advice about treatment provision and explains how to set up and manage a dental clinic within existing healthcare systems.

A wide spectrum of oral health issues is covered and it could be argued that less breadth and more depth in specific areas might have been better. However, it does declare itself as a 'stepping stone' and includes web links and other contacts for the more specialised treatments. Readers and users are urged by the authors to send comments and contribute their experiences for sharing on a website and to help inform future editions.

The authors are to be congratulated for producing a well-constructed and well-illustrated manual. It is far from easy to write a manual on this topic for non-dentally trained personnel but their effort is laudable. This book will facilitate further improvement of oral health in societies that are less 'well-to-do' and the Sunnymede Trust are to be commended for producing it.

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