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Top tips on staying up to date in Primary Care

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Abstract

It is important that dental professionals stay up to date with developments in dentistry such as new guidelines, latest research and technology. However, the myriad of information sources, compounded by a lack of time can make staying up to date a difficult task. An effective strategy to help you stay well informed and avoid information overload is to streamline electronic communications. Automated systems can be set up to assemble updates from numerous sources into a single digital location, which can be checked at a time convenient to you. This Top Tips article presents some recommendations for streamlining information notifications, which after the initial set up, will save time and effort.

E-mail updates

Many information sources can be set up to deliver updates by e-mail. It is best to be selective at first, choosing sources relevant to UK practice, before adding to their number. Below are some suggestions for useful and relevant e-mail updates that you could subscribe to.

- The British Dental Journal and sister publications BDJ in Practice, BDJ Open, BDJ Team and Evidence-Based Dentistry are all published by Springer Nature. Creating an account with the publisher allows you to sign up for e-mail alerts for each of these publications (note these are listed under Medicine). Follow the links to sign up for alerts from the BDJ homepage at: <https://www.nature.com/bdj/> These alerts will provide readers with news, current affairs, educational and practice updates as well as peer reviewed research evidence.
Insert journal cover image montage here. Suggestion below.
- Dental Update and The Dentist offer free e-mail alerts, providing news, discussion articles and knowledge and education updates. Much of the content is free or open access. Sign up to alerts from their websites at:
The Dentist <https://www.the-dentist.co.uk/>
Dental Update <https://www.dental-update.co.uk/>

The British Dental Association <https://bda.org/> as well as the College of General Dentistry <https://cgdent.uk/> both offer e-mail newsletters, even to non-members (note the link to the College of General Dentistry newsletter sign-up is <https://cgdent.uk/college-newsletter/>). These provide latest news about practice, regulation, compliance and governance. The College of General Dentistry also produces a peer-reviewed journal for the whole dental team, Primary Dental Journal <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/PRD>. This quarterly journal focuses on a particular theme with each issue (e.g. aesthetic dentistry, digital dentistry, oral surgery) and provides knowledge and education articles. Members of the College receive print issues and can access the full online archive of over 1,400 articles. If you're not a member, you can read and download the open access content and purchase individual issues. You can also stay up to date by following the College or the BDA on social media. The College has a new Instagram page <https://www.instagram.com/cgdentyoungdental/> specifically curated for dental students and early

career professionals, which posts tips and advice, and highlights relevant open access articles from the journal.

Managing e-mail updates

Creating numerous e-mail alerts has the potential to overload your inbox, but there are some options for managing the volume of e-mail traffic. First, consider if you prefer to create a designated e-mail inbox for keeping up to date, which is separate from your primary e-mail. This option prevents your own inbox from becoming too busy, but requires regular checking. It may be more convenient for e-mail alerts to be filed in a folder inside your primary e-mail account. Most e-mail services allow this function; check the settings for filters, folders, or categories.

Twitter lists

Twitter (rebranded as X) continues to be widely used by many organisations and is a good source for keeping up to date. If you are an active tweeter, you might consider creating a new profile for your professional interests which will prevent your personal feed from becoming overloaded. There are many key organisations which actively push content on Twitter. These can either be *followed*, or you can create a *List* within Twitter, which is a way of organising the content. Key dental publications also tweet their latest papers. These are often at e-publication stage, before the papers appear in an assigned issue. Suggested accounts and their *handles* are given below. You can search for these handles and then either *follow* them or add them to your *list*. To search, include the @ symbol e.g. @TheDentalElf (without spaces).

| Keep up to date with practice, news & events | Twitter handle |
|--|------------------|
| General Dental Council | @GDC_UK |
| College of General Dentistry | @CGDent |
| Dentistry (news website and magazine) | @Dentistry |
| British Dental Association | @TheBDA |
| British Association of Dental Therapists | @BADT1963 |
| Keep up to date with research | |
| British Society for Oral and Dental Research | @BSODR_UK |
| International Association for Dental Research | @IADR |
| British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry | @bascd_uk |
| British Dental Journal | @The_BDJ |
| Dental Elf (research evidence blog) | @TheDentalElf |
| JDR Clinical & Translational Research | @JDRClinTransRes |
| Community Dental Health | @CDHJournal |

Creating knowledge from information

The recommendations presented above are strategies for managing information by selecting and combining information streams into a single digital location. These digital items remain explicit forms of information until they have been read and internalised by you, the reader.¹ This is when explicit becomes tacit knowledge. The conversion of knowledge across explicit and tacit forms is illustrated in Figure 1. Whilst information management is concerned with retrieving, assembling and organising information, the discipline of knowledge management is concerned with the creation and exchange of knowledge between individuals and across organisations.² Knowledge management practitioners believe that knowledge is created when people interact, therefore opportunities for professionals to connect and mobilise knowledge is seen as a key strategy.³ The final recommendation therefore is to seek out networking opportunities with other dental professionals.

Networking

Attending conferences is not only a way of learning about new research, products and technologies. They are also places to connect with other professionals. Whilst conference keynotes and presentations disseminate information, they are often uni-directional. Many conference programmes also include workshop activities, where knowledge exchange can be dynamic, unplanned and multi-way. Some of the key dental conferences in the U.K. are:

- British Dental Conference and Dentistry Show. This takes place at the Birmingham NEC in May each year. The sister event takes place in the London Excel Centre in October. Both events are inclusive for all members of the dental team.
- Specialist interest societies such as the British Society of Periodontology <https://www.bsperio.org.uk/> often host an annual conference. Other special interest conferences are held by the British Society of Prosthodontics <https://www.bsspd.org/>, British Society of Paediatric Dentistry <https://www.bspd.co.uk/>, British Society for Oral and Dental Research <https://bsodr.org.uk/> and British Society of Dental Hygiene & Therapy <https://www.bsodht.org.uk/>.

Local Dental Committees are a valuable source of networking for dentists with an NHS contract. Dental professionals working in private practice can instead link up with others through regional branches of special interest societies, such as those above. There may also be opportunities to network with other dental professionals through events hosted by one of the U.K.'s dental schools. These may include evening lectures or alumni events.

Networking does not have to be with people outside of the home practice. Knowledge can be mobilised through regular journal club and knowledge exchange activities within the practice. A journal club, for example, would encourage the whole dental team to engage with dental literature. Team members should take it in turns to select and share an article for discussion. Further sharing of knowledge can take place following attendance at a conference or lecture. When keeping yourself up-to-date, consider what might be useful for other team members, and the best mechanisms for sharing knowledge with colleagues.

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Journal cover montage (to be created by BDJ editorial team)

| | Tacit knowledge | Explicit knowledge |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Tacit Knowledge | <p>Socialisation</p> <p>Networking with other professionals for example through attending conferences or afterwards disseminating to the team.</p> | <p>Externalisation</p> <p>Creating information artefacts from personal knowledge, for example writing an article for a newsletter.</p> |
| Explicit knowledge | <p>Internalisation</p> <p>Learning from information that is written, for example reading a research paper.</p> | <p>Combination</p> <p>Organising explicit information for example creating an folder for e-mail newsletters, or a curated list on Twitter (X).</p> |

Figure 1: Adapted from Nonaka’s SECI model of knowledge creation (1994). This depicts four modes of knowledge creation: Socialisation (when individuals interact); Externalisation (when knowledge is expressed in written form); Combination (when explicit information is organised); and Internalisation (when documented information is learned and understood).