



Addressing Deficiencies in Dental Documentation for Enhanced Patient Care

Aysha Chalappurath Muhammed**Department of Health Information Management, Primary Healthcare Corporation, Qatar*

***Corresponding Author:** Aysha Chalappurath Muhammed, Department of Health Information Management, Primary Healthcare Corporation, Qatar.

Received: July 21, 2025**Published:** August 01, 2025

© All rights are reserved by

Aysha Chalappurath Muhammed.

Technological advancement and innovative treatment modalities have reformed and reshaped dentistry greatly ensuring superior quality and effective dental treatment. Accurate and comprehensive documentation of patient dental records plays a major role and marks as one of the cornerstones of effective patient care is [1]. A well prepared and maintained dental record can contribute advantages to multiples levels including medical, surgical, legal and ethical aspects [1-3]. Dental records are official document with diagnostic information, clinical notes, treatment performed and patient-related communications that occur in the dental office, including instructions for home care and consent to treatment [4,5].

The role of comprehensive documentation is critical in healthcare system including dentistry to ensure quality of care, provide patient safety, improve treatment outcomes, facilitate continuous patient care, maintain organizational data integrity, improve productivity of the employees and facilitate research [2,6-8]. Despite its fundamental importance, dental documentation often plagued with deficiencies such as inconsistencies, omissions, variabilities and inaccuracies. There is no universally standardized format for dental records leading to miscommunications and potential errors [1]. The situation has worsened recently with advent of electronic health records (EHRs) due to lack of effective training on HER systems resulting in incomplete or improperly entered data [1,9].

The impact of deficient documentation

Considering other healthcare sectors, the attentiveness on records among dentists are minimal and often taken lightly leading to repercussions causing harm to patients compromising the quality of care [5]. Incomplete records can hinder the dentist's ability to make informed clinical decision compromising the treatment outcome [1,10]. For an example, missing or insufficiently taken past medical and surgical history can cause potential harm to patients by conducting contraindicated procedure without sufficient precaution. If the dental professional fails to maintain record for follow up care can result in further complicate the treatment outcome resulting in otherwise avoidable complications [11]. Moreover, legal and ethical risks associated with deficient documentation is critically important [7,8]. In the event of any adversities and malpractice accusations, inadequate records can undermine the defense for the practitioner jeopardizing the professional credibility and reputation [8].

It is imperative that dental professionals have a responsibility to recognize, address and resolve these shortcomings to bridge the gap and enhance patient care. A multifaceted approach is definitely required focusing on continuous education and standardization [9,10]. Efforts must be taken to address the lack of standardized documentation template in the practice. Professional dental organizations could play a pivotal role in this affair of developing standardized documentation protocols by adopting and modifying existing templates and guidelines [2-4]. Additionally, dental professionals must be well trained with strategies to improvement of clinical documentation with proper use of HER systems [9]. Ad-

adaptation of standardized HER into the practice with innovative interfaces and automated prompts must be entertained [9,10]. Reinforcement on the need for maintain detailed and accurate record should be conveyed effectively through continuous education system [5,12].

Conclusion

Embracing innovative treatment modalities and technological advancements are indeed essential for the progress in the field, to deliver enhances patient care but let's not overlook the fundamental practice of meticulous documentation. A comprehensive documentation will aid in better clinical outcomes, increased patient safety and strengthened trust between dental professionals and their patients. Additional care must be taken to recognize the existing deficiencies and potential proactive measures to address them to maintain a comprehensive, accurate, and legal sound document.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Bibliography

1. Devadiga. "What's the deal with dental records for practicing dentists? Importance in general and forensic dentistry". *Journal of Forensic Dental Sciences* 6.1 (2014): 9.
2. H Mortazavi., *et al.* "Importance, Advantages, and Objectives of Taking and Recording Patient's Medical History in Dentistry" (2015).
3. M Astekar., *et al.* "Maintaining dental records: Are we ready for forensic needs?" *Journal of Forensic Dental Sciences* 3.2 (2011): 52.
4. M Lawney. "For the record. Understanding patient record-keeping". *The New York State Dental Journal* 64.5 (1998): 34-43.
5. K Charangowda. "Dental records: An overview". *Journal of Forensic Dental Sciences* 2.1 (2010): 5.
6. Devadiga. "What's the deal with dental records for practicing dentists? Importance in general and forensic dentistry". *Journal of Forensic Dental Sciences* 6.1 (2014): 9.
7. Savić Pavičin A., *et al.* "Maintenance of Dental Records and Forensic Odontology Awareness: A Survey of Croatian Dentists with Implications for Dental Education". *Dentistry Journal (Basel)* 9.4 (2021).
8. Lewis. "Duty of Candour: The Legal and Regulatory Risk that Dentistry Forgot". *Primary Dental Journal* 11.4 (2022): 30-37.
9. YH Sidek and JT Martins. "Perceived critical success factors of electronic health record system implementation in a dental clinic context: An organisational management perspective". *International Journal of Medical Informatics* 107 (2017): 88-100.
10. IK Murdoch., *et al.* "Determinants of Clinical Decision Making under Uncertainty in Dentistry: A Scoping Review". *Diagnostics* 13.6 (2013).
11. H Nassar., *et al.* "Dental follow-up and maintenance index: the development of a novel multidisciplinary protocol". *Heliyon* 6.5 (2020): e03954.
12. V Padmanabhan., *et al.* "Understanding patient safety in dentistry: evaluating the present and envisioning the future-a narrative review". *BMJ Open Quality* 13.2 (2024): 2502.