

BUSINESS AND PEOPLE BUILDERS

The business of oral care

1
CPD CREDIT

Oral care is not only important to our overall health and wellbeing, it also has a cosmetic aspect that is crucial to our appearance, our confidence and our sense of self. It's these cosmetic factors that make oral care big business. People are always more motivated to take care of those health matters that are visible, rather than those that are not. Good health and hygiene has long been deemed a symbol of wealth, and even in ancient times people were keen to pay attention to their oral health.



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Early toothbrushes were found in the pyramids of Egypt, dating back to around 3000BC. These were made from sticks, with one end frayed to provide bristles.

More closely related to our modern toothbrushes was the bamboo and boar hair toothbrush created by the Chinese between the 1400s and 1600s. This idea later spread to Europe, with the rough boar bristles replaced by those of horse hair to reduce the damage to gums.

These animal-hair brushes were used in oral care until the invention of nylon by DuPont in the 1930s. The fundamentals of oral care have changed very little over time. An abrasive brush combined with a powder or paste that assists with tooth cleaning is still the mainstay of good oral hygiene.

Many apparently modern innovations in oral care in fact date back some time and modern versions are, for the most part, incremental refinements of the original concept, rather than true innovations. For example, the first electric toothbrush is reported to have been marketed in 1880, but an effective commercial model was not introduced until the mid-1940s in Switzerland. In 1960, the first electric toothbrush was

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Learning objectives:

After completing this CPD activity, pharmacists should be able to:

- Understand the components of a pharmacy oral care business.
- Discuss factors which are important to the development of a successful pharmacy oral care business.

Pharmacist competencies addressed: 1.3, 3.4, 6.2, 6.3.

Accreditation number: A1408RP3

sold in the US, but the concept did not become popular until a cordless model was introduced soon afterwards.

Even so, widespread use of electric toothbrushes and similar devices has been a relatively recent phenomenon. This is mostly because electric toothbrushes are now more easily available and also more affordable, in line with the majority of consumer electronic devices.

Pharmacy's oral care niche

There are four main objectives of daily oral care: to clean teeth, clean gums, whiten teeth and freshen breath. There is relatively little regulation on products marketed for these purposes, and offerings in each category are available in pharmacy as well as in general retail. While regular dentist visits are essential to good oral health, and dentists do provide cleaning and whitening services, dentists do not generally sell day-to-day oral care products. Therefore, an important niche for pharmacies is in offering specialised oral health products that are not available in supermarkets and that complement the advice and treatment of dentists, without any competitive conflicts. In this niche, as with many others, to offer the same products that supermarkets stock provides no competitive advantage to a pharmacy. Few pharmacies can compete with supermarkets on price. So, offering specialised products creates an avenue to attract customers who may not otherwise come into your pharmacy, and to increase the spend of your existing customers. However, selling specialised products requires specialised knowledge. It's important that all staff are well trained in the uses, features,

advantages and contraindications of the oral care products you stock.

Developing good relationships with the dentists in your area is a productive way to improve your own knowledge and that of your staff. Ensure you keep in stock the products local dentists recommend. Understand why they recommend these products and for which indications. This will help you to provide the best possible service to customers who are paying a premium for these specialised products. Examples could include toothpastes for sensitive teeth, electric toothbrushes, enamel protection products and advanced tooth-whitening applications.

Denture and oral appliance care

Denture care is another niche where pharmacies can play an important role. Typically, customers requiring dentures fall into a demographic bracket that makes up a large part of pharmacies' regular customers. So, this is an important area for staff to be knowledgeable and for the right products to be stocked.

As well as dentures, there are other appliances used for both oral care and other applications that may require special care, such as braces, mouthguards, and mandibular splints used for sleep apnoea.

Paediatric oral care

Paediatric oral care is another specialist area in which pharmacies can play a key role. Parents, especially new parents, will visit the pharmacy often for help and advice with their children's health concerns.

Advice and information on suitable dental care should form part of your baby care and child health services. Seeking treatments for teething pain, parents of infants may also have questions and concerns about oral care for their baby. This could include matters such as suitable toothbrushes, when to introduce toothpaste, and the timing of their child's first dental visit. Fluoride use has been well accepted since the 1960s as providing major public health benefits and significant reductions in the incidence of dental caries, but this is still a topic that causes some controversy and is periodically the subject of sensationalist news stories. Parents of young children may need

reassurance about the use of fluoride in oral care products. They may also have questions about fluoride supplementation, or may have concerns about the fluoridation of water. It's important that pharmacists provide evidence-based advice when such questions are raised. Other issues that can also impact on oral health, such as medication use, reflux, breastfeeding and the long-term use of feeding bottles, are matters where pharmacy staff can provide valuable input. One of the innovations in oral care that is truly 21st century is the array of tooth brushing apps. These are especially designed to make brushing more appealing for children and to help them to brush for the recommended length of time. Examples include the Macleans Nurdle Time and the Colgate Tooth Fairy apps.

Dry mouth

Pharmacists are knowledgeable on the causes and treatments of



dry mouth and, in particular, the impact of medication use on this aspect of oral care. Specialised products, as well as relevant advice, may be needed for patients in this category. This is another area where pharmacy can provide a value-added service that is unavailable from other retailers.


Modern marketing and oral care

Oral care is a pertinent example of the age-old marketing approach

of creating a problem and then selling a solution. Listerine is a famous example of just this approach, being marketed through a campaign that linked bad breath to lack of success in finding a spouse.

However, people have been trying to solve bad breath since before recorded history, with archaeological evidence showing that teeth-cleaning implements, pastes, powders and mouth rinses were fashioned from every

imaginable material – animal, vegetable or mineral. Yet these were usually home-made remedies made from readily available household items, such as twigs, feathers, herbs, charcoal and salt. What has changed in contemporary society is the marketing of mass produced products to alleviate age-old ills. Extended life expectancy also means that we need the use of our teeth for much longer than people did in ancient times. Advances in oral health and health care more generally have certainly improved the longevity of our teeth. However, the myriad products available today can be bewildering. Pharmacists have an important role to play by offering advice that helps their customers to choose the right products and treatments for optimum oral health. ^{RP}

 **CPD Assessment Questions**
Turn to page 84 to earn **1** credit

Know the signs. **Feel the difference.**



Keep my gums healthy



The average gum line is 50 cm¹, make sure your customers look after every millimetre of it. They can find information to complement your counselling on maintaining healthy gums and other oral health concerns at listentoyourmouth.com.au



Parodontax is a registered trade mark of the GSK group of companies. GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, 82 Hughes Avenue, Ermington NSW 2115. GSK0076/E S&SH March 2014. Reference: 1. GSK data on file September 2012.



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PATIENT-CENTRED CARE

Supporting patients in effective treatment of gum disease

Accreditation number: A1408RPO **2** Credits



This activity has been accredited for 1 hr of Group One CPD (1 CPD Credit) that may be converted to 2 Group Two CPD Credits upon successful completion of the below assessment for inclusion on an individual pharmacist's CPD Record.

Ms OI (27 years) enters the pharmacy and requests some "teething gel". Upon your further enquiry, you learn that the "teething gel" is actually for her (not for a child) to treat some "gum irritation". She tells you that the lower gum on the left side of her mouth is really sore and swollen, with some slight bleeding. The problem began about two days ago, and is making it difficult for her to eat. This is the third time she's had the problem in the last couple of months. Ms OI does not want to use anything strong as she is four months' pregnant, which is why she asked for baby "teething gel". She says she is being careful about what she takes, eats and uses, including changing to a herbal toothpaste. How do you respond?

1. Gum disease has been linked to which of the following health conditions:

- A) Cardiovascular disease.
- B) Adverse birth outcomes in pregnant women.
- C) Dementia.
- D) All of the above.

2. Which of the following is not a common cause of gum disease?

- A) Crooked and/or overlapping teeth.
- B) Poor oral hygiene.
- C) Hormonal changes during puberty.
- D) Excessive protein intake in the diet.

3. Non-pharmacological strategies for managing gum disease can include:

- A) Using antibacterial mouthwashes.
- B) Use of inter-dental brushes.
- C) Smoking cessation.
- D) All of the above.

4. Which of the following medications is known to adversely affect the gums?

- A) Phenytoin.
- B) Lisinopril.
- C) Sertraline.
- D) Ethinyloestradiol.

5. The use of anticholinergic drugs can predispose to gum disease and periodontal complications.

- A) True.
- B) False.

BUSINESS AND PEOPLE BUILDERS

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Accreditation number: A1408RP3 **1** Credit



This activity has been accredited for 0.5 hr of Group One CPD (0.5 CPD Credit) that may be converted to 1 Group Two CPD Credit upon successful completion of the below assessment for inclusion on an individual pharmacist's CPD Record.

Oral care is not only important to our overall health and wellbeing, it also has a cosmetic aspect that is crucial to our appearance, our confidence and our sense of self. It's these cosmetic factors that make oral care big business. People are always more motivated to take care of those health matters that are visible, rather than those that are not. Good health and hygiene has long been deemed a symbol of wealth, and even in ancient times people were keen to pay attention to their oral health.

1. Which of these is NOT one of the four main objectives of daily oral care?

- A) Cleaning of teeth.
- B) Treatment of dry mouth.
- C) Whitening of teeth.
- D) Freshening of breath.

2. Which of these is NOT a potential niche for pharmacy in the business of oral care?

- A) Paediatric oral care.
- B) Dry mouth treatment.
- C) Tooth extraction.
- D) Denture care.

3. When stocking specialised oral care products in your pharmacy, it's important that:

- A) You have a degree in dentistry.
- B) You stock the same products as your local supermarket.
- C) You keep these products behind the counter.
- D) Your staff are well trained and knowledgeable on these products.

4. The purpose of tooth brushing apps for children is to:

- A) Encourage children to brush.
- B) Ensure that children brush for the recommended time period.
- C) Both A & B.
- D) Neither A nor B.

5. It's important to develop a good working relationship with your local dentists so that you can:

- A) Sell more toothpaste.
- B) Offer customers a specialised service unavailable from other retailers.
- C) Avoid the need for the patient to visit a dentist.
- D) Avoid the need for professional development in oral care.

Submit your answers to earn your CPD credits



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