



CDE- A MANTRA TO COUNTER CHALLENGES IN CONTEMPORARY DENTISTRY

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ABSTRACT Dentistry is progressing pragmatically with enthralling techno-scientific novelties and revolutions. As globalization advances dynamically, dentistry has become explicitly inter-disciplinary. Resultantly, dental professionals should proactively be life-long learners to maintain, improve and update their knowledge and skills since they are accountable for patient's expectations and effectiveness of treatment outcomes to accomplish the holy grail of patient's satisfaction. Despite phenomenal growth in Indian dentistry, innumerable imperfections exist that need to be summoned. In this direction, Continuing Dental Education (CDE) plays a significant role. The present review attempts to highlight how CDE can be a roadmap to provide possible corrective measures to intercept this catastrophic situation and agape new horizons for bringing revolutionary changes in scope & sphere of oral health in India.

KEYWORDS : CDE, DCI, Evidence-Based-Practice (EBP), accreditation

INTRODUCTION

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dentistry is one of the most personalized services in human experience; a healing profession providing solicitous care. Dental education has seen a phenomenal growth ever since its formal inception in India when the first dental college was established in Calcutta by Dr Ahmed in 1920. (Tandon S., 2004) Later on, the historic Dentists Act 1948 paved the way for an expedient regulation and agape new horizons for this noble profession.

Dentistry is progressing pragmatically with innovative technologies, novel dental materials & devices and advanced treatment modalities, kudos to the techno-scientific revolution! Constantly changing socio-economic dynamics, internet attributed 'information explosion' and increased awareness among healthcare consumers; altogether place greater demands on clinicians to keep themselves abreast of newer advancements in the pursuit of delivering optimal oral healthcare to their patients. Therefore, in order to ensure continued confidence of patients in dentistry, Continuing Dental Education (CDE) is the ticket for professionals to keep up and stay ahead of the curve.

In this direction, the Dental Council of India (DCI) has made CDE accreditation mandatory as a prerequisite to being registered and licensed to pursue profession of Dentistry in India. All registered Dental Surgeons would need to accomplish 100 points in 5 years (minimum 15 and a maximum of 25 points a year). 10 points for asepsis and infection control and 5 points for dental jurisprudence over a period of 5 years are mandatory. The first CDE was organized by DCI jointly with IDA in September 2007. (Continuing Dental Education, IDA)

The explicit purpose of this system is to protect public from poorly trained, incompetent or unethical dental practitioners and to update professionals to provide comprehensive (preventive, promotive, creative) oral health care services.

"Only ideas which spread, WIN." - Seth Godin

BURGEONING CDE PROGRAMMES- A BOON TO PROFESSION-

CDE programmes play magnanimous catalytic role by providing enticing platform to dental professionals for enhancing and enriching their skills, knowledge and craftsmanship. After all, a successful career depends explicitly on correct information and its sacrosanct implementation. Clinicians must remember, they are accountable for patient's expectations and effectiveness of treatment outcomes to accomplish the holy grail of patient's satisfaction. In this league, CDE courses thematically address embodiment of research strategies, up gradation of pre-conceived ideas, indoctrination of evidence-based-practice (EBP) and improvisation of byzantine treatment modalities. (Fig 1) Interactive scientific sessions, symposiums, workshops, poster

& paper presentations help to improve clinical skills, communication and collaboration.



Figure 1- CDE Objectives (Continuing Dental Education, IDA)

Now-a-days hundreds of CDE courses are carried out pan India which is benefitting the profession at an unprecedented level. Let's numerate some of the key factors that indomitably support utility of burgeoning CDE programmes in India.

Counterproductive education-

The most exorbitant challenge dental framework currently facing is the hefty mushrooming of dentists. There are approx 300 dental colleges in India & annually 25,000 graduates pass out including 5000 specialists. (Gambhir & Gupta 2016) If this grave situation continues, there will be more than 1 lakh dentist over-supply by year 2020. (Vundavalli, S. 2014) Unfortunately with this exponential expansion of dental graduates, dental education system has become counterproductive. It is a pitiable scenario that majority of students in dental school get insufficient exposure to 'real clinical world' due to inadequate 'clinical material' (patients), resultantly evidence based practice takes a back seat. We all know how little specialty training is facilitated across the continuum of dental education during present times. Infelicitously, after graduation, this contemporary brigade of dental graduates find the world of dentistry moving at an increasingly competitive clip.

Most of the fresh graduates need help and support to become proficient in all areas of general dentistry. Increased no. of CDE programs provide golden opportunity to be mentored and trained by more experienced practitioners extensively. This "hand-holding" is therefore a beckoning light for new graduates towards the road to success who are concerned about their ability to hit the ground running and step into the arena of clinical uncertainty.

Urban-Rural disparity-

Paradoxically an alarming 'urban-rural' disparity in dentist to population ratio is quite evident in India, 1: 9,000 in urban areas whereas 1: 2, 00,000 in rural areas (Healthcare and Dental industry in India, IDA, n.d.), challenging the absolute accessibility of dental services to all. Majority of new dental surgeons get a foothold in urban areas for securing better prospects & income, leading to sprouting of dental clinics. Indian dentists are feeling the pinchtoo many dentists, too many cut-rate dental offers, too much advertising, too many whining staff, too few patients.....that ultimately leads to

congestion, intense marketing, unhealthy competition and price war. Many practices are trying to fill those gaps by keeping procedures in-house which they would have ordinarily referred to specialists like impaction, periodontal surgery, orthodontic treatment, implant procedures etc. Here lies the utility of thriving CDE programs. In order to increase scope of their practices, by enrolling in maximum of courses, practitioners educate themselves how to perform procedures properly, how to avoid complications and how to manage them. The bottom line is, as much as we all need to make a living, we also need to do what is in the best interest of our patients. I believe one of the benefits of CDE is ability to recognize limits of your own comfort zone.

Inter-disciplinary demand-

Dentistry has become explicitly inter-disciplinary. As globalization advances dynamically, cross cutting issues have emerged that demand a collaborative approach. Today, dentists are front-line medical professionals in prevention, early detection and treatment of oral as well as systemic diseases. The mouth is a mirror of health or disease, as a sentinel or early warning system. Many systemic diseases and disorders have been implicated as 'risk indicators' or 'risk factors' in dental diseases. (Perry R. Klokkevold & Brain L. Mealey, 2006) Therefore, urgent need of the hour is to stretch the boundaries and encourage the fundamental shifts by inviting all disciplines; dental & medical professionals, technologists and business leaders; to espouse dentistry.

In this series, CDE programmes are playing a pivotal role by propagating concept of *"learning with each other."* These conferences provide platforms for exchanging experiences & feedback and navigate circles to strengthen networking.(Fig 2) Professionals learn *about* each other and *from* each other; to ensure that care is provided in complete & holistic manner. This amalgamation and improvisation entwine together will serendipitously benefit the mankind.

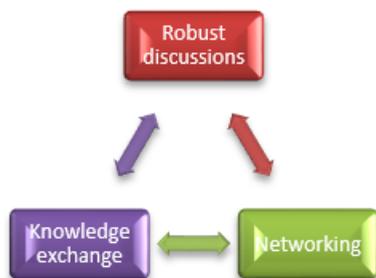


Figure2- Benefits of Inter-disciplinary approach

CONCLUSION

Dental professionals should proactively be life-long learners. It is an ethical duty for all practitioners and professionals to maintain, improve and update their knowledge and skills. CDE should insidiously become a stimulating part of all dentists' practice life. (Mark B. Lieberman, 2006) There is greater need to include a commitment to life-long learning and indispensably uphold professional ethics. Burgeoning CDE programmes in India thematically addresses this objective by bringing revolutionary change in present scope & sphere of oral health. CDE *enchantingly* leads to CPD (Continued Professional Development). We should make use of CDE in toto. Those on forefront will not only *'reap'* the rewards but more importantly *'leap'* towards providing quality service to the public and will ultimately *'lead'* the profession to the zenith of glory.

'Future belongs to those who believe in beauty of their dreams'. - E.Roosevelt

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