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"Nothing about me, without me", shared decision-making in dentistry: a scoping review

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Background:

The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) called for a focus on positive patient experience and to reduce inequalities in care decisions, provision, and outcomes. It stated that clinicians will be required to work differently, to have conversations which help patients make choices that are right for them. Shared decision-making (SDM) enables patients to be involved in diagnostic/treatment choices and can benefit disadvantaged groups and reduce inequalities. SDM strategies or aids can be a useful addition for facilitating such collaborative conversations.

Objectives:

This scoping review quantifies the literature on dental SDM aids, summarises the methods/outcomes researched, and outlines evidenced-based approaches, to promote the wider implementation of SDM within dentistry.

Methods:

A scoping review methodological framework was used and reported in line with PRISMA-ScR guidelines. MEDLINE, PubMed, Embase, Cochrane, CENTRAL databases and grey literature were searched between 1990 and 01/08/2022, and screened against pre-specified inclusion/exclusion criteria. Selected articles were independently reviewed by two researchers.

Results:

Searches identified 488 eligible articles, of which 78 were duplicates, 410 were screened and 381 excluded. Twentynine full-text articles were evaluated and by consensus, 16 were included for review. Six were review articles (two non-systematic, four opinion), five observational, and five interventional studies (three randomised-controlled trials, two trial protocols). Seventy-five percent of articles were speciality or condition specific. There were no consensus statements published. Various strategies/aids were identified including decision trees, visual decision aids, and the 'Choosing Wisely' approach.

Conclusion:

There was limited evidence reporting on SDM aids in dentistry, with much of the SDM research related to broader constructs, such as clinician knowledge/attitudes or patient preferences towards the decision-making process. There was a lack of validated approaches to the implementation of SDM. There is a need for development of more robust and comprehensive SDM aids in dentistry to facilitate collaborative decision-making to reduce inequalities and improve care.

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