

President's Column

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION GO HAND IN HAND



Dr. Louis Dubé

In a world where media and communications are all-important, professionals are subject to pressures they can't ignore. Governments and associations regularly send out news releases, alerts and reports that can influence our practice — if we have the time to read them.

Of course, methods of communication have changed considerably in recent years, and the latest news now reaches us almost instantaneously. We no longer have proper excuses for not keeping abreast of the latest developments in technology, treatments and diagnostic methods.

CDA plays a key role in disseminating valuable information via *JCDA* and other communication vehicles such as President's Letters, the *CDAAlert* e-mail service and the

Communiqué newsletter. I believe that where CDA's publications excel is in their analyses and summaries of the relevant points of a clinical or technical issue, while encouraging the reader to learn more about the topic at his or her own pace. Dentists make a point of keeping up with the latest research, but they must juggle this quest for new knowledge with heavy workloads. I'm here to tell you that CDA helps dentists meet this challenge.

Let me give you one fine example. An obstetrician called me for advice on how to deal with one of his patients. A woman had come to his office with a large, painful swelling on her jaw. She had been to see her dentist, but he didn't want to treat her because she was 35 weeks pregnant. The obstetrician wanted to know if it was common practice for dentists to react that way.

How could a dentist have concluded that the only way to respond to such a situation was to withhold treatment from the patient? After speaking with the attending physician, we concluded that, although we had to limit treatment and medication during pregnancy, this was a case where the patient should be administered safe antibiotics. In other words, the patient should have been able to quickly consult a dentist for a conservative treatment to alleviate her suffering.

We all know that medication taken during pregnancy must be limited and well managed. We are aware that, depending on the stage of pregnancy, certain drugs may not be safe. This information was published in the *Point of Care* section of the January 2004 edition of *JCDA*. At the end of the article, the author — Dr. Barbara Steinberg — provided a list of publications that readers could

consult for more information about the subject at hand.

JCDA is one way that CDA helps dentists to manage the information they need so they can improve their patients' oral health. Launched in March was *Editors' Choice*, an electronic alert service listing recent and noteworthy review papers published in the dental and medical literature. CDA is now piloting an online *Members' Forum*, a virtual community in which dentists can discuss issues relating to practice management, clinical questions, dental politics and marketplace matters in real time.

We cannot underestimate the importance of colleagues exchanging information. In all my years at CDA, I have learned a great deal from my colleagues, whether the discussion related to clinical or policy issues. Therefore, I want to take this opportunity in my final column to thank everyone at CDA with whom I have worked over the years, from Board members to National Office staff. In my experience, the Board of Directors and employees of CDA are all tremendously dedicated to the profession of dentistry, and a never-ending source of information. My wife Diane and I are proud to be part of a privileged club whose members can count on friends across Canada and abroad. I can truly say that CDA has the wind in its sails and that the next captain, Dr. Alfred Dean, has all the qualities to aptly steer the ship, regardless of any storms that may arise. With this, I say "Bon voyage."

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