

On The Cusp

Join Us On a Fantastic Voyage!

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Remember when you cultured all your root canals? Remember when you blocked out every last morsel of dentin with Dycal[®] before acid-etching the enamel? Remember when your assistant could cook a 3-minute egg in the same time it took to flush acid conditioner off your composite preparation? Remember when you troweled in successive light-cured layers of a class II composite like a mother mud-dobber wasp?

If you are like most practitioners, your evolving technique is based on clinical experience and evidence-based continuing education. Wouldn't it be great to know that your practice-based conjecture is in fact valid?

Wouldn't it be great to know that the research you read about is not driven by the manufacturer of a particular product? Wouldn't it be great to know that a new product or technique has been bench tested as well as tested in the real wet-fingered world of everyday dental practices?

Wouldn't it be great to be part of a practice-based research network where your ideas, techniques and materials could be part of the evolving standard of care?

Guess what – welcome to the Dental Practice Based Research Network (DPBRN).

I got involved with the DPBRN when I received a letter and confused the logo with the CMDF logo of the 1966 sci-fi classic *Fantastic Voyage*. Imagine my disappointment when I showed up at the orientation and didn't get miniaturized with Raquel Welch and injected into an artery.

I was, however, pleasantly surprised by the organization and enthusiasm of this dedicated group of dentists. The DPBRN is a group of dental practices that has affiliated to investigate research questions and to encourage sharing experiences and expertise.

These practices primarily are devoted to providing dental care and affiliate with a dental school that serves as the networks administrative base. The network constitutes an organization that transcends any single research project.

This research is done by and about the “real world” of private practice, where the overwhelming majority of the population receives its dental care.

Finally, this represents a new era for dental research. Laboratory studies and controlled clinical trials have typically been scientifically sound, statistically significant but **clinically useless**.

Funding for the DPBRN is through the respected National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research and is affiliated locally to the University of Florida in Gainesville.

More than 1,000 dentists are enrolled so far. For example, the research might be as simple as “Reasons for Restoration Replacement,” or what defines secondary caries at a margin? The research potential seems boundless and will be based on scientific evidence that is *confirmed* by clinical experience.

You have the opportunity to join the network. You will see where your practice is in relation to the rest of the network participants and the study results will have direct applicability to your practice.

Your patients will appreciate your involvement and the increased visibility. You will have the opportunity to input ideas that will direct the future of clinical standard of care.

It is time to move into full implementation and secure these networks as a place of learning, where doctors and patients in the community are united with science to search for answers that can provide a better basis for daily practice.¹

If you wish to join the DPBRN or have ideas for a study contact visit the UF-CD Web site at www.dental.ufl.edu/, or visit the DBPRN site directly at www.dentalpbrn.org/home.asp.

Although Raquel Welch is not part of the DBPRN, it does promise to be a fantastic voyage!

Sources

1. Green LA, Dovey SM. Practice-based primary care research networks.
2. Dr. Gregg Gilbert, DPBRN Network Chair, and Dr. Ivar Mjör, University of Florida

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