

# Uncomfortable truths

**Nicola Sherlock** reviews a new release by Graham Cope – Smoking – what all healthcare professionals need to know

This is a startling account of each and every way in which smoking affects every organ system in the individual's body – from the well-known diseases, such as lung cancer and heart disease, to less obvious effects, such as increased risk of post-operative infections and complications, a higher risk of developing MS, an increased risk of Crohn's disease, flu, pneumonia, COPD, stroke, premature dementia and type 2 diabetes. The list goes on and on. As a healthcare professional, giving advice or information to patients about smoking cessation can often be an uncomfortable conversation, fraught with the patient's emotions and complex relationship with their habit. But the author reminds us that we have a duty to help smokers quit and has made sure this can be a great aid for all healthcare professionals to ensure they are giving patients precise and relevant advice.

## Tailored advice

The Smoking Cessation chapter in particular explains the importance of smoking cessation (no matter what the healthcare professional's area of expertise or the purpose of the contact) and gives detailed principles and models to help the professional in their approach to this often-difficult subject. The chapters then turn the reader's attention to each organ system and the effects smoking can have on them; each includes more specific advice on when and how to conduct interventions which are tailored to patients who are suffering from smoking-related diseases.



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## Oral Cancer: Improving Early Detection

Oral Cancer: Improving Early Detection is a 'recommended' topic in the GDC's CPD scheme. Whilst the GDC has no current powers to introduce mandatory CPD topics, it has identified some 'core' topics that dental professionals should cover as part of their verifiable CPD. They are; medical emergencies, disinfection and decontamination and radiography and radiation protection (or materials and equipment for dental technicians).

The GDC also recommends some subjects that can be completed as verifiable or non-verifiable CPD. They are legal and ethical Issues, complaints handling and Oral Cancer: Improving Early Detection.

As a dental nurse, it is important that you understand how smoking affects the oral cavity and how best to offer brief intervention support so that you can effectively support a patient who is contemplating a quit attempt.

## Advantage

The dental team has an advantage in some senses as we can see an individual at regular intervals over a long period of time, dependent on their treatment plan, giving us many points of contact to follow-up with advice and assistance thus increasing the likelihood of quitting.

Our approach in the Community Dental Service is to train the whole team in how to deliver smoking cessation advice, that may not be the same for all dental teams but it certainly would match some of the other aspects of dental nurses' roles such as preventative and oral hygiene advice so the more knowledge and information we can relay from this methodically researched book, the better chance of 'making every contact count' and having an impact.

