

# Annual World Dentists Summit

and

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress on

## Dental Health and Oral Care

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### **Unannounced standardized patient: a reliable method for study overtreatment and under-treatment in dental practice**

**Aim:** To suggest adopting the Unannounced Standardized Patient (USP) method as the most reliable way to study overtreatment and under-treatment in dental practice.

**Method:** The reflection on the concept is based on a review of methods used in the published studies on over- and under-treatment in dentistry. We searched PubMed and Scopus using relevant keywords. The resulted papers were analyzed and filtered in terms of their relevance in three phases: by title, abstract, and full-texts.

**Results:** Very limited studies have investigated these critical concepts in the field of dental practice. They suggested or adopted each of the following three main methods: qualitative techniques, questionnaire-based surveys, or reviewing registries or insurance documents. Each of these methods, however, have some problems for direct and reliable tracking of the issue in the real practice. The researcher, here, suggests the USP method as an effective alternative for this purpose. This method would need undercover trained and examined patients to attend dental offices and clinics, with or without special dental demands. Having maintained the confidentiality of the dentists, USPs could document the suggested treatment plans, fees, and the way dentists put forward their suggestions.

**Conclusion:** Considering the importance and policy implications of studying the scope and levels of doing-more (or less)-than-what-is-needed in dental care, the limited role of third party which could help audit dental practice, and methodological issues with surveys, e.g. social desirability bias, developing a more reliable design for studying over- and under-treatment in dentistry is needed. USPs could be adopted to shed light on the obscure reality of these issues. Nevertheless, there are some major ethical issues that should be addressed in advance.

#### **Biography**

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