“Automated external defibrillators should be present in every health-care environment”

An interview with Dr Morton Rosenberg, USA, about medical emergencies in the dental practice

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Other changes include continuing education courses that incorporate task training and high-fidelity human simulators. These stress crisis management for lifelike practice in managing medical emergencies and are gaining popularity amongst dentists and their clinical staffs.

In your opinion, are dentists and dental staff today adequately prepared for most medical emergencies? Many offices have purchased basic emergency equipment, but it is the combination of a dentist and staff well trained and current in Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (BLS-HCP) that will make a difference in outcome. Every office should have the capability, at a minimum, of being able to deliver oxygen under positive pressure.

What medications should be available to manage the more common emergencies?

Oxygen should be in stock, as well as epinephrine, diphenhydramine, nitroglycerine, a bronchodilator, glucose, aspirin and aromatic ammonia. These medications should also be checked regularly to ensure they have not passed their expiration dates.

Allergic reactions to certain types of medication are an increasing problem in clinical settings. What medications do you consider problematic in this respect?

Without a doubt, antibiotics are always at the top of the list of medications that are administered to many patients in the course of dental treatment and which have the potential of being a trigger for a host of allergic reactions. It is also important for the dentist to know that an increasing number of patients have allergic reactions to latex. What types of equipment do you recommend? The equipment that should be readily available includes a portable E cylinder of oxygen, oral pharyngeal airways, as well as devices for the administration of supplemental oxygen, including a bag-valve-mask. I further recommend a second hand. Proper risk assessment and documentation could prevent many of these medical emergencies. What are the first indications that identify a high-risk patient? It is only through a detailed medical history, a thorough physical examination and vital signs, and appropriate consultation that patients at high risk for medical issues during dental procedures can be identified.

What are the best strategies for prevention? The hallmarks of a well-prepared office are meticulous preoperative assessment, appropriate and basic emergency equipment, patients and staff current in BLS-HCP. Constant review and, most importantly, unannounced drills will make the office immediately able to recognize, call for help, and address the immediate needs of the dentist patient with a medical emergency.

Thank you very much for the interview.