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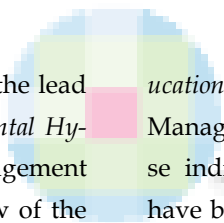
Introduction to the Special Issue on Practice Management

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It has been a pleasure to serve as the lead editor for this special issue of *Dental Hypotheses* focusing on practice management issues in the United States. A few of the “best of the best” in this discipline have served as article contributors and/or reviewers of articles. I would first of all like to thank those who served as reviewers of manuscripts along with me. Most of the reviewers also wrote or co-wrote chapters in a practice management textbook being utilized in a number of dental colleges [1]. Several of the reviewers and contributors have also served in leadership positions for many years in the *American Dental Ed-*



ucation Association Section on Practice Management [2]. The contributions of these individuals who served as reviewers have been absolutely essential to the creation of this journal issue:

- Dr. David O. Willis, professor who teaches practice management at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry; author of two dental management simulation programs
- Ms. Amy Kirsch of Amy Kirsch & Associates, a dental hygienist and dental practice management consultant from Colorado

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- Dr. Duane Schmidt, a retired pediatric dentist and former owner of a large pediatric dental practice in Iowa
- Dr. Brian Lange, professor who teaches behavioral science and practice management at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and co-editor of a leading textbook on practice management
- Dr. C. Steven Wolff, formerly in private practice and currently owner of EMA Dental Practice Sales, a dental brokerage firm in metro Kansas City.

The articles in this special issue focus on topics of vital current interest in practice management. Dr. Wolff's article focuses on the impact of recent economic trends on dental practice sales and associateships. Dr. Madden's article reviews and provides perspective on the controversial issue of "mid-level" patient care delivery models emerging in the U.S. Dr. Lange et al. provide a much needed update regarding teaching practice management in dental schools and ideas for improving said instruction. Dr. Willis' article raises alarming concerns about whether dental practice may follow in the footsteps of pharmacy, moving potentially toward what Dr. Willis terms the "Walmartization" of dentistry. Dr. Schmidt outlines in his article a practical perspective of risk management as a guiding force for practice management. Last-

ly, Dr. Dunning et al. present preliminary data about dental hygienists' views of dental staff meetings in private practice.

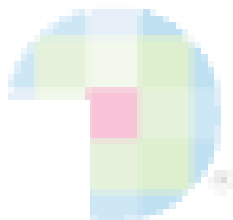
Together, these articles provide perspective on a number of important issues in practice management today.

Conflicts of interests

The author declares that he has no competing interest. He is a co-editor of the textbook cited in the references. The author served as a co-author in two of the articles to be published in this special issue, though outside reviewers critiqued the articles. He also has editorial involvement with *Dental Hypotheses*.

References

1. Dunning DG, Lange BM. *Dental Practice Transition: A Practical Guide to Management*. Ames, Iowa: Wiley-Blackwell; 2008: v-vi.
2. American Dental Education Association (ADEA). *Practice Management* [Accessed September 12, 2011]. Available from: http://www.adea.org/about_adea/governance/Pages/PracticeAdministration.aspx



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