

Sci-Hub and evidence-based dentistry: an ethical dilemma in Cuba.

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One quarter of dental procedures are not scientifically supported, what means that they are potentially dangerous.¹ Evidence-Based Dentistry emerges as an approach to dental care that requires the judicious integration of systematic assessments of updated scientific evidence related to the oral and general health of the patient, their treatment needs and preferences, and the clinical expertise of the dentist.²

The above supposes a passage from an information-storage dentist to an information-manager one. This poses serious problems for the professional, who should read an average of 19 articles daily 365 days a year.³ The problem is that many of these articles are freely accessible or lack clinical relevance or are subject to methodological errors.

In the case of Cuba, dentists' access to the best scientific evidence is limited because textbooks are obsolete and there is no institutional access to articles of high scientific quality due to lack of funding to pay subscriptions. In addition, initiatives like HINARI do not consider Cuba as a candidate.

Databases such as PubMed and SciELO, and open-access journals allow the access to thousands of articles for free. However, the most important journals in the area of Dentistry are not indexed in these databases nor belong to the open-access initiative.

Then the following question arises: how can they keep up to date and treat patients using the best scientific evidence Cuban dentists? Faced with this reality, an "alternative" would be to use pirated websites that "facilitate" access to thousands of articles published in high-impact journals.

Sci-Hub is a pirated web repository launched in 2011 that currently hosts more than 50 million articles and is used by thousands of people daily to access information.⁴

Given this scenario, an ethical dilemma is presented to Cuban dentists by having to choose between dentistry unsupported adequately in the best scientific evidence and the use of Sci-Hub.

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