

CED Resolution

Dental Data Set and Access to Health Records

I. Access to Health Records for Dentists

The Council of European Dentists (CED) is a European not-for-profit association which represents over 340,000 dental practitioners across Europe through 33 national dental associations and chambers in 31 European countries. Established in 1961 to advise the European Commission on matters relating to the dental profession, the CED key objectives are to promote high standards of oral healthcare and dentistry and effective patient-safety centred professional practice.

Oral health is an integral part of general health and well-being. A range of diseases can be classified as oral diseases including dental caries, periodontal diseases, dento-facial trauma, dental erosion, oral pathology and cancers. Oral cancer is one of the cancers with the lowest survival rate in the European Union, due to late detection. The survival rate decreases from 80% in cases of early detection to just 50% in case of late detection.ⁱ

The CED believes that there is a need for better information sharing between the professions to provide optimal care to their patients.

Digital health poses a critical challenge to the personal health data protection of patients. The CED emphasises the importance of compliance with the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR)ⁱⁱ while processing personal data of individuals in the EU. In all cases, patients must always give their explicit consent for use of their health data and can withdraw it whenever needed.

- **In the interest of patients, it is paramount that dentists have access to relevant health-related information.** For this reason, dentists should have access to any general medical system database which contain information on patients' medical and social history.
- **Furthermore, information about a patient's allergies is of crucial relevance in dental practice.** Instant notifications through e-prescribing helps dentists to provide alternative medication or suggest substitute therapies.
- It is crucial to increase early detection of potential oral cancer through increasing awareness and exchange of information among the medical profession, patients and the public.ⁱⁱⁱ **Access to health-related information should be given to all healthcare professionals, whether they are part of the public system or not.**
- Dentists are typically the first professionals who are approached to treat ailments within the oral cavity, making them uniquely placed to perform opportunistic screening for oral cancer and to provide advice and counselling interventions during routine examination. **By having full access to a broad overview of patient health records, the dentist would have a better understanding of the risk factors affecting the individual.**
- **This could improve early diagnosis which would ultimately benefit the healthcare system as a whole and improve survival of oral cancer patients.**

II. Dental Data Set

Following the development of the European Health Record, the CED recommends that a dental data set should be included in the cross-border information exchange.

The inclusion of dental health records in national and European health records could eradicate unnecessary duplication of tests and procedures such as CBCT and OPT radiographs, which would deliver immediate savings to the healthcare system and avoid overexposure.^{iv} Record sharing may also lead to reduced prescribing of antibiotics.

Dental records play a major role in identifying the victims of criminal investigations, mass disasters, grossly decomposed or traumatized bodies, and in other situations where visual identification is not possible. Forensic dentistry plays a major part in identification processes where other methods cannot, or can only be partially, used.

III. Basic dental data set

Bearing in mind the substantial amount of dental health-related information, the CED identified the basic dental data set and classified it depending on its relevance. The CED calls on the European Commission and Member States to take it into account when discussing the set of health information domains for cross-border exchange.

Relevant information that should be available to the dentist:

Information		Relevance	Justification	Examples
Medicine/medicaments	Current use/prescription	Must	Patient safety	Treatment impact Prescriptions
	Past use/prescription	Must	Patient safety	Bisphosphonates give high risks for simple dental procedures
Allergies		Must	Patient safety	Prescriptions by dentist
Social history	Smoking/drinking	Need	Better treatment	Detection of cancer risk
Medical history	Non communicable diseases	Must	Patient and dental team safety	
Devices	General prosthesis	Need	Better treatment	Hip prosthesis; Pacemakers can have a serious impact on chosen treatment

Minimum dental data set to be included in the cross-border information exchange:

Information		Relevance	Justification	Examples
Dental status with x-ray		Must	Patient safety Dental identification/forensics	Diagnosis and treatment efficiency
Radiographs				
	OPT	Should Must	Patient safety Dental identification/forensics	Avoidance of overexposure to radiation
	Bitewings	Optional Must	Better treatment Dental identification/forensics	Decision to restore or not to restore
	CBCT	Optional	Patient safety	Avoidance of overexposure to radiation
Devices				
	Dental Implants	Must	Better treatment	Data is necessary for repair of crown

The above-listed data set is a minimum amount of information that should be part of the health data set of for cross-border exchange. We classified the data based on its relevance and grouped it as must, need, should and optional to indicate importance of inclusion into European-wide data exchange platforms.

It is not intended nor should it serve as guidance for dental practices in the treatment of patients; clearly, a full medical history must be taken, and full examination undertaken for diagnosis and treatment planning.

III. Recommendations

Access for all healthcare professionals to national and European health records will result in the improvement of the quality and continuity of care offered to citizens. Therefore, the CED calls for:

- The basic dental data set to be included in the health records of all patients in the European Union.
- Dentists to have full access to national and European Health Records.

Adopted by the CED General Meeting in November 2019

ⁱ European Cancer Information System (2018). Estimates of cancer incidence and mortality in 2018. Retrieved from [https://ecis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/explorer.php?\\$1-All\\$2-All\\$4-1,2\\$3-1\\$6-0,14\\$5-2008,2008\\$7-7\\$0-0\\$CEstByCountry\\$X0_8-3\\$CEstRelative\\$X1_8-3\\$X1_9-AEE](https://ecis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/explorer.php?$1-All$2-All$4-1,2$3-1$6-0,14$5-2008,2008$7-7$0-0$CEstByCountry$X0_8-3$CEstRelative$X1_8-3$X1_9-AEE)

ⁱⁱ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>

ⁱⁱⁱ CED White Paper Oral Care: Prevention is better than cure

^{iv} Any digital imagery must be in compliance with the DICOM standard. <https://www.dicomstandard.org/>