
**COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC
HEALTH: ADAPTING EUROPEAN APPROACHES IN
DENTAL PRACTICE TO THE UKRAINIAN CONTEXT**

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DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-637-9-23>

INTRODUCTION

The issue of communication management in public health has acquired particular significance in recent decades, given the transformation of health care systems, the increasing role of patient-centered approaches, and the integration of digital technologies into clinical practice. Communication management can be understood as a complex and interdisciplinary process of planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating communicative interactions between various stakeholders in the health sector, with the ultimate goal of improving both clinical outcomes and the quality of health services¹.

Within this general framework, dentistry occupies a distinctive and sensitive place, as dental practice involves not only the treatment of diseases but also preventive, educational, and aesthetic dimensions that require effective communication with patients, professional colleagues, and society at large.

The specificity of dental practice lies in the fact that it directly touches upon socially significant issues, such as oral health promotion, preventive care, and the reduction of health inequalities². Furthermore, oral health is closely linked to general health and well-being, which makes the role of communication especially important in dentistry.

Patients often approach dental care with heightened psychological sensitivity due to anxiety, fear of pain, or concerns about aesthetic outcomes. In this regard, communication management becomes not merely a supplementary professional skill but a fundamental competence that influences the effectiveness of treatment, patient satisfaction, and trust in the healthcare system as a whole.

¹ Aleksandra Bendowska. The Significance of Cooperation in Interdisciplinary Health Care Teams as Perceived by Polish Medical Students. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 Jan 5;20(2):954. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20020954>

² Casey J Hannan. Addressing Oral Health Inequities, Access to Care, Knowledge, and Behaviors. *Prev Chronic Dis*. 2021 Mar 25;18:E27. <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd18.210060>

European experience demonstrates that strategic communication is increasingly regarded as a vital component of dental services. The European Union and the World Health Organization emphasize the necessity of comprehensive communication strategies in public health, which include awareness-raising campaigns, the use of e-Health technologies, and the introduction of patient-oriented educational programs³.

In the field of dentistry, such approaches are manifested in the development of standardized guidelines for communication with patients, the inclusion of communication skills in medical curricula, and the implementation of innovative digital tools for information sharing and patient engagement. Thus, the European model of communication management in dentistry represents an integrated system in which clinical expertise is combined with communicative competence, ethical responsibility, and cultural sensitivity.

Another dimension of communication management in dentistry relates to its interdisciplinary character. Dental professionals must maintain constant interaction not only with patients but also with hygienists, therapists, maxillofacial surgeons, orthodontists, and other members of multidisciplinary health teams. Effective communication is essential for coordinating treatment plans, ensuring continuity of care, and achieving better overall outcomes.

Furthermore, at the level of public health, communication extends beyond individual treatment and encompasses community-based initiatives aimed at prevention, education, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles⁴. This highlights the necessity of systemic and strategic approaches to communication management, which can only be realized through well-structured managerial models.

The academic significance of studying communication management in European dental practice is further reinforced by the growing challenges faced by health systems. These include demographic changes, such as population ageing; the growing burden of chronic diseases; the digital transformation of health services; and the need for harmonization of health policies across EU member states.

All these factors create a demand for more effective communication strategies capable of addressing not only clinical but also socio-cultural and ethical aspects of health care⁵. By analyzing the specific case of dentistry, it is possible to reveal broader trends and methodological foundations relevant for the development of communication management in public health as a whole.

³ Michael Odongo. Health Communication Campaigns and Their Impact on Public Health Behaviors. June 2024 *Journal of Communication* 5(2):55-69. <https://doi.org/10.47941/jcomm.1980>

⁴ Cheryl Merzel. Reconsidering Community-Based Health Promotion: Promise, Performance, and Potential. *Am J Public Health*. 2003 Apr;93(4):557-574. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.93.4.557>

⁵ Monica Elisa Meneses-La-Riva. Enhancing Healthcare Efficiency: The Relationship Between Effective Communication and Teamwork Among Nurses in Peru. *Nurs Rep*. 2025 Feb 7;15(2):59. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nursrep15020059>

The practical relevance of this study lies in the fact that communication management is directly linked to the accessibility, quality, and efficiency of dental services. Inadequate communication often leads to misunderstandings, non-compliance with treatment plans, and dissatisfaction among patients, which, in turn, reduces the effectiveness of medical interventions. Conversely, well-structured communication enhances adherence to treatment, builds long-term trust, and contributes to the creation of a positive public image of healthcare institutions.

In the European context, where healthcare systems are increasingly evaluated by indicators of patient satisfaction and health equity, communication management has become one of the central tools for ensuring sustainable development in the dental sector.

The novelty of this research lies in the systematic comparison of European models of communication management with the specificities of dental practice as a unique field within public health. This approach allows not only to generalize best practices but also to develop recommendations for the adaptation of these practices to the needs of healthcare systems undergoing transformation. At the same time, the article emphasizes the ethical, psychological, and socio-cultural dimensions of communication, which are often underestimated in managerial discourse but remain decisive for the effectiveness of health services.

In summary, the introduction of communication management into the conceptual and practical framework of dentistry reflects broader trends in public health, where the centrality of the patient, the importance of preventive care, and the reliance on digital technologies require new managerial models. By addressing the European context, this study seeks to reveal both the achievements and the challenges of communication management in dental practice, thereby contributing to the broader academic discussion on the modernization of healthcare systems and their communicative infrastructures.

1. Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Communication Management in Public Health

Communication management has become one of the most dynamic research and practical fields in the contemporary health sciences. Its significance is determined not only by the transformation of health systems worldwide but also by the growing role of patient-oriented approaches, preventive medicine, and the digitalization of medical services.

In public health, communication is not limited to the transfer of information but is a systemic process that encompasses persuasion, education, behavioral modification, and the creation of trust-based relationships among multiple stakeholders⁶.

⁶ Jette Ammentorp. Translating knowledge into practice for communication skills training for Health Care Professionals. August 2022 *Patient Education and Counseling* 105(11).<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2022.08.004>

Within this context, the conceptualization of communication management requires both theoretical generalization and methodological precision.

The term “communication management” is interdisciplinary in nature. From the standpoint of management theory, it refers to the planning, organization, and evaluation of communication processes aimed at achieving specific objectives. From the perspective of communication studies, it involves the study of messages, channels, feedback, and the impact of symbolic interaction on human behavior.

In public health, communication management integrates these dimensions into a holistic model that links medical expertise with social sciences, psychology, and cultural studies. This integration allows for the development of communication strategies that address not only clinical but also social determinants of health, which are crucial for understanding disparities in access to healthcare.

The methodological foundations of communication management in healthcare rest upon several key paradigms. The systems approach considers communication as an integral part of the health system that must function in balance with its institutional, technological, and social subsystems. The stakeholder approach emphasizes the plurality of actors involved in public health communication, including patients, healthcare professionals, policymakers, insurers, and civil society organizations.

The behavioral approach focuses on communication as a tool for influencing health-related behavior, such as adherence to medical prescriptions, preventive practices, and lifestyle modifications. Finally, the cultural approach highlights the importance of cultural, linguistic, and ethical contexts, which often determine the success or failure of communicative interventions.

An essential aspect of theoretical analysis lies in the conceptual distinction between communication management and medical communication in the narrow sense. Whereas medical communication usually refers to the interpersonal interaction between a healthcare provider and a patient, communication management is a broader construct that encompasses organizational, institutional, and societal levels of communication⁷.

For example, a dentist explaining a treatment plan to an individual patient applies clinical communication skills, while a national dental association launching a preventive campaign on oral hygiene practices engages in communication management. Both levels are interrelated, yet they require different methodological tools and managerial strategies.

⁷ Dina Zota. Essential Skills for Health Communication, Barriers, Facilitators and the Need for Training: Perceptions of Healthcare Professionals from Seven European Countries. *Healthcare* (Basel). 2023 Jul 18;11(14):2058. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11142058>

The European public health context provides a fertile ground for studying the theoretical and methodological bases of communication management. In many EU member states, communication is institutionalized through national health promotion agencies, professional associations, and EU-level initiatives.

The European Commission's emphasis on patient rights, data protection, and cross-border healthcare has fostered the development of unified communication standards that prioritize transparency, informed consent, and accessibility of information. This institutional framework creates an environment in which communication management is not a matter of individual professional competence but a systemic requirement embedded in policy and practice.

Equally important is the role of digital transformation. The incorporation of e-Health tools, electronic health records, and telemedicine platforms has altered the methodological framework for studying communication management⁸. Researchers now analyse not only traditional face-to-face interactions but also mediated forms of communication through digital interfaces.

These technologies enable wider access to healthcare information but simultaneously pose challenges related to the accuracy, personalization, and ethical use of data. Methodologically, this necessitates the inclusion of information and communication technologies (ICT) into the theoretical model of communication management in public health.

Another fundamental dimension is the ethical paradigm. Communication in healthcare cannot be reduced to managerial efficiency alone; it is deeply embedded in ethical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. Methodologically, this requires incorporating ethical reasoning into communication strategies, ensuring that managerial decisions respect the dignity and rights of individuals.

For instance, in dental practice, communication about treatment costs, risks, and aesthetic outcomes must be transparent, sensitive, and equitable, especially when addressing vulnerable populations. Thus, the ethical dimension becomes an inseparable part of the methodological foundations of communication management.

The methodological toolkit employed in the study of communication management is diverse. Quantitative methods, such as surveys and statistical modelling, allow researchers to measure the effectiveness of communication campaigns, assess patient satisfaction, and analyse behavioral outcomes⁹.

⁸ Dilaver Tengilimoğlu. Analysis of Publications on Health Information Management Using the Science Mapping Method: A Holistic Perspective. *Healthcare (Basel)*. 2024 Jan 23;12(3):287. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12030287>

⁹ Diogo Cunha Ferreira. Patient Satisfaction with Healthcare Services and the Techniques Used for its Assessment: A Systematic Literature Review and a Bibliometric Analysis. *Healthcare (Basel)*. 2023 Feb 21;11(5):639. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11050639>

Qualitative methods, including interviews, focus groups, and discourse analysis, provide insight into the subjective experiences of patients and healthcare providers.

Mixed-method designs offer a more comprehensive approach by combining measurable indicators with in-depth understanding of communicative processes. In addition, comparative analysis is frequently used in European studies to evaluate communication strategies across different countries and health systems, thereby identifying best practices and transferable models.

In summary, the theoretical and methodological foundations of communication management in public health rest upon the integration of multiple disciplinary perspectives and research paradigms. Communication management is simultaneously a managerial function, a social process, and an ethical practice.

It operates on micro, mesa, and macro levels of the health system, ensuring coherence between interpersonal communication in clinical practice and systemic strategies aimed at population health. The European experience illustrates how communication management can be institutionalized, technologically supported, and ethically grounded, offering valuable lessons for the further development of dental practice and public health in general.

2. Dental Practice as a Specific Space of Communication

Dental practice represents a distinctive and highly specific sphere of healthcare where communication acquires exceptional importance. Unlike many other medical specialties, dentistry operates at the intersection of clinical treatment, preventive interventions, and aesthetic considerations, all of which require continuous and nuanced interaction with patients and other stakeholders. Communication in dentistry is not merely an auxiliary activity but a fundamental dimension of professional competence, shaping the quality of care, patient satisfaction, and the public perception of oral health services.

The unique character of dental practice as a communicative space arises from the particularities of its clinical context. Dental appointments typically involve close physical proximity between the professional and the patient, which can generate heightened feelings of anxiety, discomfort, or vulnerability¹⁰. Many individuals approach dental care with apprehension, often-linked to painful past experiences or fears of invasive procedures.

This psychological background significantly increases the communicative burden on dental professionals, who must not only provide medical information but also alleviate anxiety, build trust, and encourage adherence to treatment

¹⁰ Muhammad Taqi. Patient perceptions and experiences of dental fear of different dental specialties: a mixed-method study. *BMC Oral Health*. 2023 Nov 19;23:884. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12903-023-03626-3>

recommendations. In this sense, communication in dentistry has both informational and therapeutic functions, as it directly influences the psychological state of the patient and their willingness to cooperate.

Equally important is the preventive orientation of dentistry. Oral health is widely recognized as a critical component of general health, with strong associations between oral diseases and systemic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory infections. Preventive communication—focused on oral hygiene, dietary habits, and regular dental check-ups—therefore constitutes a central task of dental practice.

Unlike acute clinical interventions, prevention requires sustained communication strategies that engage patients over long periods, fostering lifestyle changes and self-care routines. Here, communication extends beyond the individual consultation and often includes public health campaigns, educational programs in schools, and community outreach initiatives.

Dental practice also has a pronounced aesthetic dimension, which further distinguishes its communicative profile. Issues related to dental appearance—such as tooth alignment, colour, or restoration—are closely tied to personal identity, self-esteem, and social confidence. Discussions about aesthetic treatments require a high degree of communicative sensitivity, as they involve subjective perceptions of beauty, cultural norms, and financial considerations.

Dental professionals must therefore balance clinical objectivity with empathy, ensuring that patients feel respected and understood¹¹. Miscommunication in this sphere can lead not only to dissatisfaction but also to ethical conflicts and legal disputes.

From an organizational perspective, dentistry is a field where interdisciplinary cooperation is increasingly important. Effective communication is essential in coordinating treatment plans that may involve orthodontists, prosthodontists, oral surgeons, dental hygienists, and general practitioners. Such collaboration requires clarity, consistency, and mutual respect among professionals, supported by standardized communication protocols.

At the mesa level of dental clinics and institutions, communication management ensures the smooth functioning of administrative processes, patient record systems, and quality assurance mechanisms. In Europe, where many dental services are integrated into broader healthcare networks, communication management also encompasses coordination with insurance providers, regulatory authorities, and public health agencies.

¹¹ Lance Brendan Young. A Typology of Empathic Communication Strategies in Dental Visits. *Eur J Dent Educ.* 2025 Feb 20;29(2):410–417. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eje.13081>

The ethical dimension of communication in dentistry cannot be overstated. Informed consent represents a cornerstone of ethical dental practice, requiring that patients are provided with comprehensive and comprehensible information about the nature, risks, benefits, and costs of proposed treatments. However, the complexity of dental terminology and the emotional stress of patients can complicate this process.

Consequently, dentists must employ strategies of plain language communication, visual aids, and empathetic dialogue to ensure true patient understanding. Beyond informed consent, ethical communication also entails respect for patient confidentiality, non-discrimination, and sensitivity to socio-economic disparities in access to dental care.

Another critical feature of dental communication is the management of time. Dental appointments are often brief, and professionals must deliver essential information within a limited timeframe without sacrificing clarity or empathy. This requires advanced communication skills that combine efficiency with attentiveness.

In addition, the repetitive nature of certain preventive messages—such as brushing techniques or dietary advice—can pose challenges for maintaining patient engagement¹². Effective communication in this context relies on creativity, the use of motivational interviewing techniques, and reinforcement through multiple channels, including digital platforms.

The European context provides several illustrative examples of how communication is institutionalized in dental practice. In countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands, preventive communication is strongly integrated into school-based oral health programs, ensuring that children develop positive oral hygiene habits from an early age. In Germany and France, dental associations actively engage in public campaigns that promote awareness of oral health as part of general well-being.

Meanwhile, digital innovations in the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries demonstrate how mobile applications and online platforms can facilitate patient education, appointment reminders, and interactive communication between dentists and patients. These practices highlight that communication in dentistry is increasingly understood not only as an interpersonal skill but also as a systemic component of healthcare management.

Methodologically, the study of dental communication requires a multidisciplinary approach. Psychological research explores the mechanisms of dental anxiety and the effectiveness of communication strategies in reducing patient

¹² Chin-Hsuan Yeh. Comparison Between Powered and Manual Toothbrushes Effectiveness for Maintaining an Optimal Oral Health Status. *Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigational Dentistry* October 2024;16:381-396. <https://doi.org/10.2147/CCIDE.S490156>

fear¹³. Sociological studies analyse how socio-economic status and cultural norms shape patients' attitudes towards dental care and their communicative interactions with professionals.

From a managerial perspective, research focuses on how communication can be optimized at organizational and policy levels to improve the efficiency and equity of dental services. Such multidisciplinary insights underscore the need to conceptualize dental practice as a unique communicative environment, where clinical, social, and ethical dimensions are inseparably interwoven.

In conclusion, dental practice constitutes a specific space of communication within public health, characterized by clinical intimacy, preventive orientation, aesthetic sensitivity, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Communication in this context is not a secondary skill but a decisive factor in treatment effectiveness, patient satisfaction, and the promotion of oral health at both individual and community levels.

The European experience demonstrates that strategic communication management in dentistry can significantly contribute to the improvement of healthcare systems by ensuring transparency, fostering trust, and addressing the psychological and cultural needs of patients. This understanding provides a conceptual foundation for further exploration of European approaches to communication management in dental practice, which will be the focus of the subsequent chapter.

3. European Approaches to Communication Management in Dentistry

The European Union has gradually developed a coherent framework for communication management in healthcare, which also extends to the field of dentistry. This framework is shaped by a combination of supranational policies, national strategies, and professional guidelines, all of which emphasize transparency, patient-centeredness, and ethical responsibility.

Dentistry, as a branch of public health, has benefited from this evolution, integrating communicative competence into clinical practice, educational curricula, and institutional management¹⁴. The European approaches illustrate a model where communication is not regarded as an optional skill but as a structural component of dental care and health policy.

At the supranational level, the European Union has introduced multiple directives and regulations that influence communication in healthcare.

¹³ Jasmine Cheuk Ying Ho. Strategies for Effective Dentist-Patient Communication: A *Literature Review*. *atient Prefer Adherence*. 2024 Jul 1;18:1385–1394. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PPA.S465221>

¹⁴ Richard S Masella. Dental Education and Evidence-Based Educational Best Practices: Bridging the Great Divide. January 2005. *Journal of Dental Education* 68(12):1266-71. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.0022-0337.2004.68.12.tb03876.x>

For example, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees access to healthcare and patient rights, including the right to information and informed consent.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has established strict rules for handling patient data, emphasizing confidentiality, transparency, and informed communication in all health-related contexts. In dentistry, this has translated into clearer patient information policies, standardized informed consent procedures, and stronger protection of sensitive medical and aesthetic data.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe further strengthens communication management through its oral health strategies, which stress health promotion, education, and community engagement. These international frameworks set the foundation upon which national health systems and professional dental associations build their communication standards.

European countries demonstrate both convergence and diversity in their approaches to communication management in dentistry¹⁵. In Germany, communication management is institutionalized through professional chambers and associations, which provide guidelines on patient information, transparency in treatment planning, and cost disclosure. France emphasizes the role of public campaigns in dental prevention, with state-sponsored initiatives that promote oral hygiene across all age groups.

The Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden and Norway, prioritize preventive communication, embedding oral health education in schools and community health programs. This preventive orientation reflects broader public health traditions in these countries, where communication is aimed at empowering citizens and reducing health inequalities.

In contrast, Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland and Hungary, are in the process of strengthening their communication management systems, often adopting EU standards while addressing local challenges such as limited resources, uneven access to care, and cultural barriers to preventive communication.

Such comparative analysis demonstrates that, despite differences in national health systems, communication management in dentistry across Europe is increasingly oriented toward harmonization, transparency, and patient empowerment.

One of the most significant features of European communication management in dentistry is the integration of digital technologies. E-Health and mHealth tools are widely used to facilitate patient education, enhance treatment

¹⁵ Diarmuid B Shanley. European convergence towards higher standards in dental education: The DentEd Thematic Network Project. March 2002. *Medical Education* 36(2):186-92. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01125.x>

adherence, and support preventive communication. For example, mobile applications provide personalized reminders about oral hygiene routines, while virtual consultation platforms allow patients to seek advice without geographical constraints. In the United Kingdom, digital portals are integrated into the National Health Service (NHS), enabling patients to access dental records, treatment histories, and educational resources.

Tele-dentistry, increasingly adopted across Europe, represents a novel form of communication management. It allows for consultations, diagnosis, and follow-up care through digital channels, reducing barriers to access, particularly in rural areas. At the same time, digital transformation poses challenges related to the digital divide, data protection, and the need for dental professionals to acquire new communication skills suited to online environments.

Communication management in European dentistry also involves large-scale public health campaigns aimed at raising awareness of oral health¹⁶. Examples include the “European Oral Health Day,” supported by the Council of European Dentists, and national initiatives such as “Smile for Life” in the UK. These campaigns utilize multiple communication channels—television, radio, print media, and social networks—to reach diverse audiences and emphasize prevention as the cornerstone of oral health.

Community engagement is another hallmark of European approaches. Many countries involve local schools, municipalities, and non-governmental organizations in oral health promotion, recognizing that communication must extend beyond the dental clinic into the broader social environment. This reflects a systemic understanding of communication management as a multi-level process that links clinical practice with public health strategies.

European dental education increasingly incorporates communication skills into curricula. Universities and professional training programs emphasize the development of interpersonal skills, cultural competence, and the ability to communicate effectively with diverse patient populations. Simulation techniques, role-playing, and patient-centered learning approaches are widely used to prepare dental students for real-life communicative challenges.

Continuing professional development also plays a key role, as practicing dentists are encouraged to refine their communication skills throughout their careers. Professional associations, such as the European Dental Association, provide specialized courses and workshops on patient communication, conflict management, and the use of digital communication tools¹⁷. This emphasis on

¹⁶ Eileen Goldberg. Mass media campaigns for the promotion of oral health: a scoping review. May 2022. *BMC Oral Health* 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12903-022-02212-3>

¹⁷ Aram V. Baykov. Insights into communication in dental education and practice: a narrative review. March 2025. *BULLETIN OF STOMATOLOGY AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY* 21(2):259-271. <https://doi.org/10.58240/1829006X-2025.2-259>

lifelong learning reflects the recognition that communication in dentistry evolves with social changes, technological innovations, and patient expectations.

Despite national variations, there is a clear movement toward harmonization of communication management in dentistry across Europe. This is facilitated by EU-level initiatives, professional networks, and academic collaboration. The emerging European model is characterized by the following features:

- *institutionalization of patient rights and informed consent;*
- *integration of digital and tele-dentistry tools into communication strategies;*
- *preventive orientation of communication, with strong emphasis on education;*
- *recognition of communication as a professional competence equal to clinical skills;*
- *systemic efforts to reduce inequalities in access to dental information and care.*

This model reflects broader trends in European healthcare governance, where communication is seen not only as a professional responsibility but as a structural element of quality assurance and patient safety.

European approaches to communication management in dentistry illustrate the integration of legal, organizational, technological, and educational dimensions into a coherent system. By institutionalizing patient rights, embracing digital innovations, and embedding preventive communication in public health strategies, Europe has established a framework that strengthens both clinical effectiveness and social trust. While challenges remain—such as addressing inequalities, managing digital risks, and ensuring cultural sensitivity—the European experience provides a valuable reference point for other regions. For dentistry in particular, communication management is increasingly recognized as a strategic tool that enhances treatment outcomes, fosters preventive behavior, and aligns clinical practice with the ethical and cultural expectations of society

3.1. Socio-Cultural and Psychological Factors of Communication in Dentistry

Communication in dentistry cannot be reduced solely to the transmission of clinical information or the management of treatment protocols. It is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural and psychological realities of both patients and professionals. Dentistry represents one of the most sensitive areas of healthcare, where personal identity, cultural values, and emotional responses converge.

Understanding these factors is therefore essential for effective communication management, as they shape how patients perceive their oral health, interact with dental professionals, and respond to recommendations.

One of the central socio-cultural dimensions of dental communication lies in cultural norms and values related to health and aesthetics¹⁸. Oral health is not only a medical issue but also a cultural marker that reflects broader notions of hygiene, beauty, and social status. In many European societies, a healthy and aesthetically pleasing smile is associated with professionalism, attractiveness, and social success.

Consequently, communication about dental treatment often involves navigating cultural expectations and societal pressures. Dental professionals must therefore approach patients with cultural sensitivity, recognizing that perceptions of dental health and beauty vary significantly across regions, age groups, and socio-economic strata.

The psychological aspects of dental communication are equally important, particularly because dentistry is closely associated with anxiety and fear. Dental anxiety is one of the most common forms of medical phobia, affecting patients across all age groups and often serving as a barrier to seeking timely care. Effective communication plays a crucial role in addressing this challenge.

Dentists must use empathetic listening, reassurance, and clear explanations to reduce patient anxiety and foster a sense of safety. Techniques such as motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral communication strategies, and the use of visual aids have been shown to improve patient cooperation and treatment adherence.

Another psychological factor shaping dental communication is the issue of trust. Dentistry involves invasive procedures, often performed in highly intimate physical proximity, which can generate feelings of vulnerability in patients¹⁹. Trust in the competence, honesty, and empathy of the dentist becomes a prerequisite for successful interaction.

Miscommunication, lack of transparency, or insufficient attention to patient concerns can undermine this trust, leading to dissatisfaction, complaints, or even refusal of treatment. Conversely, when communication is respectful and patient-centered, it reinforces trust, promotes adherence to treatment, and strengthens long-term professional-patient relationships.

The role of age and generational differences in dental communication deserves particular attention. Children, adolescents, adults, and elderly patients all have distinct communicative needs. For example, children often require simplified language, playful interaction, and the presence of parents during consultations to reduce fear and build positive associations with dental care.

¹⁸ Jasmine Cheuk Ying Ho. An Overview of Dentist–Patient Communication in Quality Dental Care. *Dentistry Journal January* 202513(1):31. <https://doi.org/10.3390/dj13010031>.

¹⁹ Judy M McDonald. Exploration of Mental Readiness for Enhancing Dentistry in an Inter-Professional Climate. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Jul 1;18(13):7038. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18137038>

Adolescents may be more concerned with aesthetic issues and peer perception, necessitating communication strategies that address self-image and social confidence. Elderly patients, on the other hand, may face complex health conditions, polypharmacy, or cognitive decline, which requires patience, clarity, and multidisciplinary communication involving caregivers and family members. These differences highlight the need for adaptive and flexible communication approaches that are tailored to the developmental and psychological characteristics of each patient group.

Socio-economic status is another critical determinant of dental communication. Patients from disadvantaged backgrounds may have limited health literacy, reduced access to preventive care, and greater mistrust of healthcare institutions²⁰. Effective communication in such contexts requires special attention to language clarity, avoidance of medical jargon, and sensitivity to financial constraints.

In Europe, where dental services are often unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas, communication also plays a role in reducing health inequalities. Outreach campaigns, school-based oral health programs, and community education initiatives represent practical forms of communication management that aim to bridge socio-economic divides and ensure that vulnerable populations receive adequate information and care.

Gender differences also influence communication in dental practice. Research indicates that women are often more proactive in seeking dental care and may be more responsive to preventive communication, whereas men may delay consultations and require different motivational strategies. In addition, gender-sensitive communication must also take into account cultural and societal expectations regarding appearance, self-care, and professional image, which can influence how patients perceive the necessity of treatment. For dental professionals, awareness of these dynamics enhances their ability to communicate effectively and respectfully across diverse patient groups.

Finally, the cultural and psychological dimensions of communication in dentistry extend to the professional community itself. Dental professionals bring their own cultural backgrounds, personal communication styles, and psychological attitudes into clinical interactions. Stress, burnout, and workload can affect the quality of communication, underscoring the need for supportive organizational environments that promote well-being and reflective practice. In this sense, communication management is not only about addressing

²⁰ Paula Allen-Meares. Health Literacy Barriers in the Health Care System: Barriers and Opportunities for the Profession. *Health Soc Work*. 2020 Jan 28;45(1):62–64. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/hlz034>

patient needs but also about fostering professional resilience and intercultural competence within dental teams²¹.

In conclusion, socio-cultural and psychological factors profoundly shape communication in dentistry, influencing both individual treatment outcomes and broader public health objectives. Effective communication requires cultural sensitivity, psychological awareness, and the capacity to adapt to diverse patient needs.

By addressing issues such as anxiety, trust, socio-economic disparities, and generational differences, dental professionals can create communicative environments that enhance patient satisfaction, promote preventive behaviors, and contribute to the overall effectiveness of public health systems.

The European context provides valuable examples of how these dimensions are incorporated into professional training, policy frameworks, and community outreach, reinforcing the understanding of dentistry as not only a clinical but also a deeply communicative field of healthcare.

3.2. Innovative Tools of Communication Management in Dentistry

The development of innovative tools for communication management in dentistry reflects broader transformations in healthcare driven by digitalization, patient-centered approaches, and the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge.

Dentistry, being both technological and deeply personal, increasingly relies on modern instruments that enhance the clarity, accessibility, and effectiveness of interactions between professionals and patients. These innovations are not limited to technological solutions but also encompass methodological, organizational, and pedagogical practices that redefine the way communication unfolds in the dental context.

One of the most visible transformations has been the digitalization of dental communication. Electronic health records, digital imaging systems, and cloud-based platforms have made the exchange of medical information faster, more precise, and more transparent. Dentists can now demonstrate treatment plans using three-dimensional models, intraoral scanners, and computer-assisted design technologies, which significantly improve patient understanding and engagement²².

Instead of relying solely on verbal explanations, professionals can visualize clinical conditions and possible outcomes, thereby reducing uncertainty and

²¹ Rodrigo Mariño. Cultural competency and communication skills of dental students: Clinical supervisors' perceptions. July 2016. *European Journal Of Dental Education* 21(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/eje.12227>

²² V Arun Kalyan. Unlocking the Future of Dentistry with Intraoral Scanners. In book: Science and technology : Devolpment and applications (pp. 92) Publisher: BP. May 2025. <https://doi.org/10.9734/bpi/stda/v2/4008>

increasing patient confidence in decision-making. Digital tools, therefore, serve as mediators of trust and clarity in the dentist–patient relationship.

Tele-dentistry represents another major innovation in communication management. Although initially developed to expand access to care in remote or underserved regions, it has become an integral part of modern European dental systems, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Through video consultations, secure messaging, and digital platforms, patients can receive preliminary advice, post-treatment follow-ups, and preventive education without visiting a clinic in person.

For dentists, this innovation reduces administrative burden and allows for better time management, while for patients it provides convenience, accessibility, and reduced costs. Tele-dentistry also demonstrates how innovative communication practices can address systemic inequalities by reaching populations traditionally excluded from routine dental care.

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are rapidly emerging as powerful tools for improving communication in dentistry. AI-driven diagnostic tools can process radiographic images, identify early signs of caries or periodontal disease, and even propose treatment options. While these technologies primarily serve clinical purposes, they also transform communication by providing patients with more accurate, objective, and personalized information.

The use of AI-generated visualizations and risk assessments can improve patients' understanding of their oral health status and motivate them toward preventive behaviors. Furthermore, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants are increasingly integrated into dental practices to provide round-the-clock responses to frequently asked questions, appointment scheduling, and pre-consultation guidance.

Patient education has also benefited from innovative communication tools. Traditional brochures and verbal instructions are gradually being replaced by interactive mobile applications, online learning platforms, and gamification strategies²³. These resources allow patients to access personalized content, monitor their oral hygiene behaviors, and receive reminders about preventive measures.

For younger generations, educational games and animated videos represent particularly effective ways of instilling healthy habits and overcoming fear of dental visits. Importantly, these tools are not merely supplementary but integral to the broader framework of public health communication, aligning dentistry with global efforts to improve health literacy.

²³ Ching-Yi Lee. Emerging trends in gamification for clinical reasoning education: a scoping review. *BMC Med Educ.* 2025 Mar 25;25:435. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-07044-7>

Innovations in communication also extend to professional collaboration. Dentistry, like other medical fields, increasingly relies on interdisciplinary cooperation, particularly in cases where oral health is closely linked to systemic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, or oncology. Digital platforms now facilitate seamless communication between dentists, general practitioners, specialists, and allied health professionals.

Shared records, collaborative treatment planning, and virtual case discussions improve continuity of care and ensure that patients receive holistic management. In this way, communication innovations reinforce the integration of dentistry into broader healthcare systems.

Social media has emerged as a controversial but undeniable tool of dental communication management. On one hand, it offers professionals a powerful platform to disseminate preventive messages, promote awareness of oral health, and connect with patients in accessible and informal ways. On the other, it raises ethical and regulatory challenges concerning the accuracy of information, patient confidentiality, and the commercialization of dental services. Despite these challenges, social media remains a vital instrument in contemporary communication strategies, particularly for reaching younger demographics and promoting community-based oral health campaigns.

From the organizational perspective, innovations in communication management also involve the training and continuous professional development of dental staff²⁴. Simulation technologies, virtual reality, and standardized patient scenarios are increasingly used in dental education to strengthen communication competencies. These methods allow future professionals to practice empathy, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution in a safe and controlled environment.

By focusing on both technical and communicative skills, modern education ensures that dentists are prepared not only to deliver high-quality treatment but also to engage effectively with diverse patient populations.

Furthermore, innovations in communication management in dentistry are closely connected to data analytics and evidence-based approaches. Patient feedback systems, satisfaction surveys, and digital monitoring tools provide valuable insights into communication effectiveness. Clinics and public health organizations use these data to refine strategies, identify gaps, and implement targeted interventions. This continuous feedback loop transforms communication into a measurable and improvable dimension of dental practice rather than a purely intuitive skill.

²⁴ MengWei Pang. Education Project in Dentistry Based on the Positive Behavior Support Theory: Pilot Curriculum Development and Validation Study. *JMIR Formative Research*. Volume 8, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2196/50389>

In conclusion, innovative tools of communication management in dentistry represent a multifaceted phenomenon that combines technological progress, methodological evolution, and organizational adaptation.

They redefine how patients interact with dental professionals, how information is conveyed and understood, and how dentistry is integrated into the wider healthcare ecosystem. By embracing digital technologies, artificial intelligence, tele-dentistry, educational innovations, and interdisciplinary collaboration, modern dental systems in Europe set a benchmark for communication practices that are patient-centered, accessible, and future-oriented.

3.3. Adapting international experience for the development of dental communication management in Ukraine

The European and broader international experience in communication management within dentistry provides a valuable framework for the modernization of Ukraine's healthcare sector. While Ukraine has made significant progress in reforming its medical system, dentistry remains an area where communication strategies require systematic improvement to align with modern standards of patient-centered care and public health priorities. The transfer and adaptation of international best practices could serve as a powerful driver of progress, provided that these practices are contextualized to address national realities, cultural specificities, and institutional challenges.

One of the most relevant lessons from the European context is the integration of communication management into national public health policies²⁵. In many European Union member states, oral health communication is not treated as a narrow professional issue but as a component of broader preventive health strategies. This includes large-scale awareness campaigns, community education, and the systematic involvement of schools, media, and local organizations in promoting oral health literacy. For Ukraine, where preventive dental care is often under prioritized, adopting similar models would allow the strengthening of health promotion and the reduction of long-term inequalities in oral health outcomes.

Digitalization is another field where European experience can inspire meaningful reforms in Ukraine. The use of tele-dentistry, electronic medical records, and AI-driven diagnostic tools has proven highly effective in enhancing communication between providers and patients in Europe.

For Ukraine, which faces the dual challenges of rural undercoverage and economic constraints, digital innovations offer opportunities to expand access,

²⁵ Robert Steiner. Restoring trust in public health: communications lessons from person-centered health care. *Eur J Public Health*. 2025 Mar 25;35(Suppl 2):ii9–ii10. <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckae151>

reduce costs, and make communication more transparent. At the same time, this requires investment in digital infrastructure, training for healthcare workers, and the development of regulatory frameworks that ensure patient confidentiality and ethical use of digital tools.

An equally important dimension of international experience is the focus on communication psychology and patient trust. In Europe, emphasis is placed on empathy-based communication, motivational interviewing, and patient-centered consultations²⁶. Ukrainian dentistry could benefit greatly from the systematic introduction of these methods, as they address long-standing issues of patient anxiety, mistrust of institutions, and reluctance to engage in preventive care.

By cultivating communicative competence as a core professional skill, Ukrainian dental professionals would be better positioned to foster sustainable relationships with patients and improve adherence to treatment recommendations.

Professional education and training also represent a critical sphere for adaptation. European dental schools have increasingly incorporated simulation-based learning, standardized patient encounters, and reflective practices into their curricula. These methods allow students to practice communication skills in realistic settings and to receive structured feedback.

For Ukraine, enhancing dental education with such tools would prepare a new generation of professionals capable of navigating the socio-cultural and psychological complexities of patient interaction. Moreover, continuous professional development programs could be established to ensure that practicing dentists also remain up to date with evolving communication strategies and technologies.

The organizational and policy frameworks that support communication management in Europe also offer lessons for Ukraine. Mechanisms such as patient feedback systems, quality assessment indicators, and professional codes of conduct ensure that communication is monitored, evaluated, and continuously improved. For Ukraine, the development of similar frameworks would foster accountability, transparency, and a culture of patient-centered service. Furthermore, aligning these measures with European standards would facilitate Ukraine's integration into international health systems and strengthen its credibility as a partner in cross-border healthcare initiatives.

Ethical considerations provide another essential area for the transfer of experience. With the rapid rise of social media, online consultations, and AI applications in dentistry, the regulation of digital communication has become a pressing issue worldwide. European countries have developed

²⁶ Alex H Krist. Engaging patients in decision-making and behavior change to promote prevention. *Stud Health Technol Inform.* Author manuscript; available in PMC: 2020 Feb 3. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6996004/>

guidelines and ethical codes to balance innovation with patient rights and professional responsibility.

Ukraine can draw on these experiences to develop its own robust regulatory framework, ensuring that communication remains safe, ethical, and oriented toward public benefit rather than commercial exploitation.

In adapting international practices, it is important to recognize that Ukraine faces unique challenges, including regional disparities, economic pressures, and the consequences of ongoing social transformations. Therefore, the transfer of European and global experience must not be mechanical but adaptive.

Successful implementation requires careful analysis of local conditions, stakeholder engagement, and pilot programs that test the applicability of new approaches in real contexts. In this process, collaboration with international organizations, professional associations, and academic institutions could provide Ukraine with not only expertise but also access to resources and networks.

The integration of digital technologies, psychological communication methods, educational reforms, policy innovations, and ethical safeguards would allow Ukraine to build a dental communication model that reflects global standards while meeting national needs. This strategic alignment would not only improve the quality of dental care but also strengthen Ukraine's healthcare system as a whole, reinforcing its resilience and capacity for sustainable development in line with international benchmarks.

CONCLUSIONS

Communication management in dentistry emerges as a complex and multidimensional field, shaped by socio-cultural contexts, psychological dynamics, technological innovations, and institutional frameworks. In the European setting, this field has undergone profound transformations, integrating principles of patient-centered care, digitalization, and public health priorities. The analysis conducted throughout the study demonstrates that communication in dental practice is not merely an auxiliary element of treatment but rather a strategic determinant of patient trust, adherence, satisfaction, and long-term health outcomes.

The European experience highlights several key trends that have universal significance. First, the emphasis on cultural and psychological sensitivity demonstrates the growing recognition that oral health is inseparable from human dignity, self-image, and social participation. Effective communication requires not only clinical expertise but also empathy, adaptability, and respect for the diversity of patient needs. Second, the development of innovative tools, particularly digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and tele-dentistry, has expanded the possibilities of communication far beyond the traditional clinical

encounter. These instruments allow for greater accessibility, accuracy, and personalization, while also reinforcing the role of dentistry within public health systems. Third, the integration of communication management into professional education and policy-making ensures that dentists are systematically trained not only as clinicians but also as communicators, educators, and advocates of health.

For Ukraine, the European experience provides a valuable model for modernization and reform in the sphere of dental communication management. The challenges facing the Ukrainian healthcare system, including uneven access to care, financial barriers, and varying levels of health literacy, make the issue of effective communication particularly urgent. Lessons drawn from Europe can inform strategies that address these challenges and foster a more patient-centered and socially responsive dental system.

One of the most immediate areas where European experience can be applied is in the digitalization of communication processes. The introduction of electronic health records, tele-dentistry platforms, and AI-based diagnostic tools could significantly improve communication between patients and providers, reduce administrative inefficiencies, and expand access to consultations in rural and underserved regions. For Ukraine, where geographic disparities in access to dental care remain pronounced, these innovations would represent an important step toward equity and inclusiveness.

Equally important is the need to strengthen the psychological and cultural dimensions of dental communication. In Ukraine, dental anxiety and mistrust of medical institutions remain barriers to preventive care. European approaches that integrate motivational interviewing, empathy-based communication training, and patient education campaigns could be adapted to local contexts. By adopting these methods, Ukrainian dental professionals would be better equipped to build trust, reduce fear, and foster long-term adherence to preventive measures. This, in turn, would contribute to the improvement of overall oral health indicators at the population level.

The European experience also underscores the importance of professional education as a foundation for communication management. Ukrainian dental curricula could be enhanced through the introduction of specialized courses in communication psychology, intercultural competence, and the use of digital tools in patient interaction.

Simulation technologies, standardized patient programs, and reflective learning practices, already widely used in Europe, could serve as effective methods for strengthening communicative competence among Ukrainian dental students and practitioners. Such reforms would ensure the formation of a new generation of dental professionals who are not only technically proficient but also skilled in addressing the diverse communicative needs of patients.

Policy and organizational frameworks represent another sphere where European experience could inform Ukrainian reforms. The systematic incorporation of communication strategies into national oral health programs, the promotion of preventive campaigns, and the development of patient feedback mechanisms could create a more transparent and responsive healthcare environment. In this regard, Ukraine could benefit from adopting European practices of integrating dentistry into broader public health strategies, thereby recognizing oral health as an essential component of overall well-being and social development.

Finally, the ethical and regulatory aspects of communication, as demonstrated by European practice, provide guidance for Ukraine in establishing clear standards for digital communication, social media use, and patient confidentiality. As dental professionals increasingly engage with patients through online platforms, it is essential to ensure that communication remains ethical, accurate, and patient-centered. This dimension will become increasingly relevant as Ukraine continues its integration into the European Union and aligns its healthcare standards with European frameworks.

In conclusion, communication management in dentistry is both a clinical necessity and a public health priority. The European experience demonstrates that effective communication enhances patient outcomes, strengthens professional credibility, and contributes to health equity. For Ukraine, the adoption of these practices offers not only technical improvements but also a strategic opportunity to transform the healthcare culture toward greater transparency, inclusiveness, and trust. By investing in innovative tools, educational reforms, and policy frameworks that prioritize communication, Ukraine can build a dental system that reflects both the highest European standards and the specific needs of its society. Such a transformation would not only improve the quality of dental care but also reinforce the resilience of public health as a whole, positioning communication management as a cornerstone of healthcare modernization.

SUMMARY

The article examines the theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of communication management in the field of public health, with a specific focus on dental practice in Europe. Communication in dentistry is considered a multidimensional process that integrates clinical, psychological, socio-cultural, technological, and ethical dimensions, and is increasingly recognized as a determinant of patient satisfaction, adherence, and overall health outcomes.

The study analyses European approaches to communication management, including preventive strategies, digital innovations, tele-dentistry, professional education, and public health campaigns, highlighting their effectiveness in fostering patient-centered care and promoting oral health.

The research emphasizes the role of socio-cultural and psychological factors in shaping communication, addressing issues such as dental anxiety, trust, health literacy, generational differences, and cultural norms. It also explores innovative tools—digital platforms, artificial intelligence, eHealth applications, and simulation-based training—that enhance the quality and accessibility of communication between dental professionals and patients.

The article further considers organizational and policy frameworks that institutionalize communication management, ensure ethical standards, and support continuous professional development.

Particular attention is given to the potential adaptation of European experience to the Ukrainian context. Recommendations focus on the introduction of digital technologies, preventive communication strategies, educational reforms, ethical frameworks, and policy mechanisms to improve transparency, equity, and patient-centeredness in Ukrainian dental care.

The study concludes that integrating international best practices into the Ukrainian healthcare system can strengthen communication management, enhance oral health outcomes, and contribute to the modernization and resilience of public health services.

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