



How patient selection can affect treatment outcome

Successful dentistry is not just great technical skill and clinical precision. It is also about understanding people, their expectations, temperament, and willingness to take part in their own care. Documenting this willingness begins during the first encounter with the patient. We must ensure that treatment will proceed with cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect, especially when complications occur. Selecting the right patient is both an art and a safeguard. Just being cognizant of that fact will make our lives easier. We are in a litigious society, and we must not lower our guard due to financial or business pressures facing today's clinicians to accept every patient that walks through our doors. Dentistry is not performed in isolation; it is a partnership between the clinician and the patient.

Every patient brings in a unique temperament to the dental chair. Some are calm and trusting, while others approach treatment with apprehension or skepticism. A patient's personality can greatly influence healing, compliance, outcomes, and satisfaction.

For example, an anxious or impulsive individual may struggle to follow postoperative instructions. A highly demanding or perfectionist patient may have unrealistic expectations that cannot be clinically met. On the other hand, a cooperative and patient individual can make even a complex treatment journey smooth and successful.

Recognizing personality patterns helps clinicians tailor their communication and manage expectations early. It is also a valuable risk management tool, understanding when a patient's behavior or attitude can make providing treatment unwise.

While dismissal of a patient is never a first choice, there are instances where it becomes the most ethical and professionally sound decision. **Early recognition of incompatible dynamics allows the clinician to withdraw before significant problems arise.** Doing so respectfully, and with proper documentation protects the patient's opportunity to receive care elsewhere while safeguarding the clinician from avoidable conflict and liability.

This document is provided by Dentists Choice™ as a sample template and is intended for informational purposes only. It is essential that you customize this form to your specific needs while ensuring strict compliance with your state Laws. This sample form or any other publications or forms provided by Dentists Choice™ do not constitute clinical or legal advice. Any person should direct any specific legal or dental questions to a competent attorney or dental professional.

The information on this website or in related publications may include topics that are not covered by your insurance policy. This information does not imply coverage. Please refer to your insurance policy for specific coverage details.

Continuing treatment with a patient who refuses to follow advice, struggles with comprehending basic information or exhibits confrontational behavior can create unnecessary risk for both parties.

Wise patient selection is not an act of exclusion, but of stewardship. As dentists, our responsibility is not only to deliver care but to ensure that the care provided is of benefit for both the patient and the clinician. Recognizing willingness, comprehension, temperament, and manipulative tendencies comes with experience, reflection, and sometimes humility to say no. These lessons earned through years of practice are among the most important skills any clinician can develop to foster ethical, effective, and satisfying dental care.

This document is provided by Dentists Choice™ as a sample template and is intended for informational purposes only. It is essential that you customize this form to your specific needs while ensuring strict compliance with your state Laws. This sample form or any other publications or forms provided by Dentists Choice™ do not constitute clinical or legal advice. Any person should direct any specific legal or dental questions to a competent attorney or dental professional.

The information on this website or in related publications may include topics that are not covered by your insurance policy. This information does not imply coverage. Please refer to your insurance policy for specific coverage details.