

names, open-bay therapy areas are common, and computer screens aren't covered to ensure no one can see what's on them. Patients even post information on social media sites and contribute to the erosion of doctor-patient confidentiality.

Jerrold L: I want to see everything. *Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop* 154:883-884, 2018

Reprints not available

MEDICAL IDENTITY THEFT

Protecting against theft of your medical identity information



BACKGROUND

Medical identity theft affected approximately 2.3 million individuals in 2014-2015. The usual case is uninsured individuals who seek care under a stolen identity or obtain prescription medications fraudulently. Patients have spent an average of \$13,500 to resolve a case of stolen medical identity, but greater than the monetary costs are the costs in terms of lost trust in medical providers for failing to protect private information. The principal scenarios for medical identity theft, red flags to watch for, and steps that can help prevent this crime were outlined.

SCENARIOS

Several scenarios are commonly seen in medical identity theft. The most common involve data breaches within medical care providers. Thieves gain access to medical data systems and steal the information. There are also "friendly fraud" cases where someone the victim knows simply assumes his or her identity.

In some cases, thieves target individuals by posing as employees of an insurance company, pharmacy, or health care office. They then ask for personal information, such as the individual's Social Security number or insurance plan identifiers. Often these thieves offer for free or discounted care to the unsuspecting individual to gain access to the information.

There are also cases where an employee of a medical or dental facility steals patients' private data with the goal of selling it. Sometimes the employee allows uninsured friends or family members to obtain free care using the information.

RED FLAGS

Certain behaviors or events can indicate a possible problem. For example, the individual may offer questionable or altered documents or signatures or provide information that doesn't match what was gathered previously. Sometimes the individual acts suspiciously, such as being unable to provide basic information quickly. The individual may also refuse to present identification or to provide information to the dental office.

In some cases, the individual offers forms of identification that don't match the his or her description. If the individual is accompanied by someone else, it can be suspicious if the companion uses a different name for the patient.

If a red flag pops up, the best course of action is to alert the authorities. Rather than refuse treatment, the dentist can inform the patient that some discrepancies need to be resolved and in the meantime, it's necessary to ask that another arrangement for payment be made.

PREVENTING MEDICAL IDENTITY THEFT

Preventing fraud begins with hiring practices. All staff must undergo comprehensive background screening as well as random audits of charts and billing activity for any friends or family members seen in the office. Employees should also be trained to ask for photo identification when patients come for care. Most dental patients are comfortable with providing photo identification, so this shouldn't be too concerning and does not violate HIPAA regulations. Some dental software programs have a built-in ability to take patient photos. Patients should be reassured that these photos are only for internal use and will not be posted anywhere or used for marketing purposes. It's helpful to let them know this is part of protecting their personal information and preventing fraud.

Patients should also be educated about how to keep their private data protected. They should be reassured that the dental office staff

Clinical Significance

Medical identity theft can be a complex crime that requires the efforts of patients, health care providers, insurance companies, and law enforcement professionals for prevention. Dentists and patients can take some simple steps to make it more difficult to fall victim to these thieves.

will never call and ask for Social Security numbers or information on insurance by phone. If the patient receives such a phone call, the best course of action is to hang up immediately. Patients should also be vigilant about reviewing their insurance statements to see if any suspicious or unauthorized treatments or payments are listed.

TDIC Risk Management Staff: Are your patients who they say they are? Preventing medical identity theft. *Calif Dent Assoc J* 46:663-664, 2018

Reprints not available

MILLENNIALS AND PRIVATE PRACTICE

Meeting millennials where they shop



BACKGROUND

Millennials have the reputation of killing off what once were industry staples, such as shopping malls and the auto industry. The reputation isn't really deserved, but rather reflects the fact that these aspects of the culture didn't keep up with the wants and needs of this generation. Understanding their wants and needs will be essential if the dental office doesn't want to join those closed shopping malls.

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Millennials would rather buy the latest gadgets and technology than cars. They purchase online and rarely use their phones for talking—but they all have phones on them at all times. They are now the largest generation, so dental practices must take them seriously if they are to appeal to them as health care providers. By 2025, 75% of the US workforce will be millennials. The oldest millennials are currently age 37 years, and many have good jobs and are raising children. This makes them attractive as patients. They've consumed enough Red Bull and Starbucks coffee drinks to need the services of a good dentist.

WHAT CAN THE DENTIST DO?

Have a Digital Presence

The vast majority of millennials are willing to trade in the ability to place phone calls for unlimited data plans. Rather than call to make an appointment, what they would like to do is schedule their visit online. They also want to be able to book immediately and aren't afraid to check out the competition to see if they offer online access.

Millennials like evening and weekend hours and don't want to wait a long time for an appointment. A majority of millennials in one survey said they would change providers just for the opportunity to book an appointment quickly.

In addition to not making calls, millennials prefer not to receive calls. Instead they're good with a text to book a cleaning or to learn about follow-up care or report on their condition after a

procedure. Two-way text messaging and AI are both preferred for communication purposes.

Become Connected

The practice website is the doorway to your practice as far as millennials are concerned. It needs to make a great impression on this generation. In addition to confirming online appointments, millennials want to verify their insurance is accepted, learn about what procedures are offered, complete their paperwork online, and meet the office staff. The website needs to be mobile enabled so they can navigate on a mobile device.

Being highly visual, millennials also love to have access to photos and short videos. Many use free streaming services rather than watch television. Having videos that highlight various aspects of the practice, doing a virtual tour of the office, and offering interviews about procedures or personnel in the office will grab millennials' interest and keep them engaged. Having quick, authentic content is more valued than videos that require extensive production.

Socialize

Social media is an essential part of life for millennials. The 3 digital areas of greatest importance for the dentist to focus on are the website, Facebook page, and Google and Yelp reviews. Ninety percent of millennials trust the information offered by their health care providers on social media.

Millennials seeking Instagram-worthy experiences where they go and do things should have the opportunity to experience great times in the dental office. A practice hashtag is essential and should be used and promoted throughout the office. Millennials also trust what their friends and family post about their visits to health care providers, so the dental staff should make the visit memorable. It's vital to get them to like and share your page—and their millennial friends may become interested in you as well.

Be Specific

Big data, especially that gathered by geographic information systems (GIS), and consumer buying data provide a 360-degree view of consumers' choices, preferences, and habits. No longer is the use of big data limited to corporate giants; small organizations are also using them.