Author's response to reviews

Title: A randomised controlled trial to explore attitudes to routine scale and polish and compare manual versus ultrasonic scaling in the general dental service in Scotland ISRCTN99609795

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In the UK, dental care is provided either privately or within the National Health Service at a fixed cost that includes a patient contribution of 80% (up to a maximum charge for a course of treatment). Around 49% of the population are registered with an NHS dentist at any one time [4] but, as registration lapses if a visit is not made within 15 months, a greater proportion of the population is believed to receive care within the NHS dental service. Although the number of dental treatments provided outside the NHS scheme is increasing in the UK, an estimated 81% of treatments are currently provided under the NHS system [5] and it is likely that the majority of the population will continue to seek NHS dental care. All the patient participants in this study were receiving a scale and polish under the NHS system, for which a charge of £8.08 was in place at the time of the study.