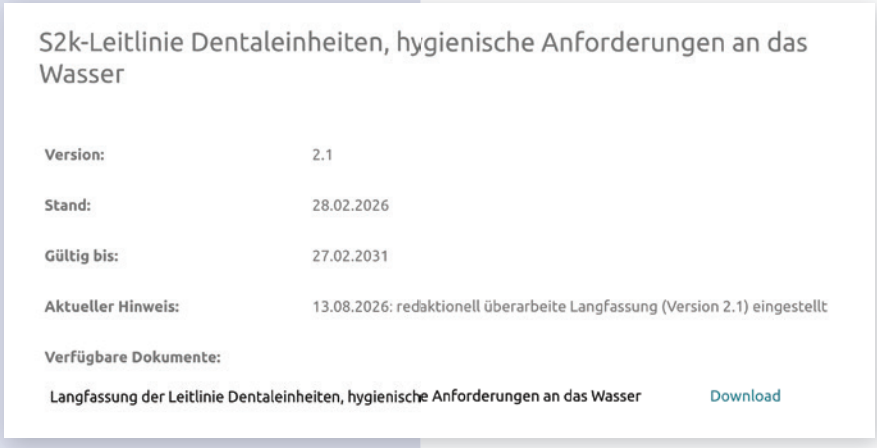
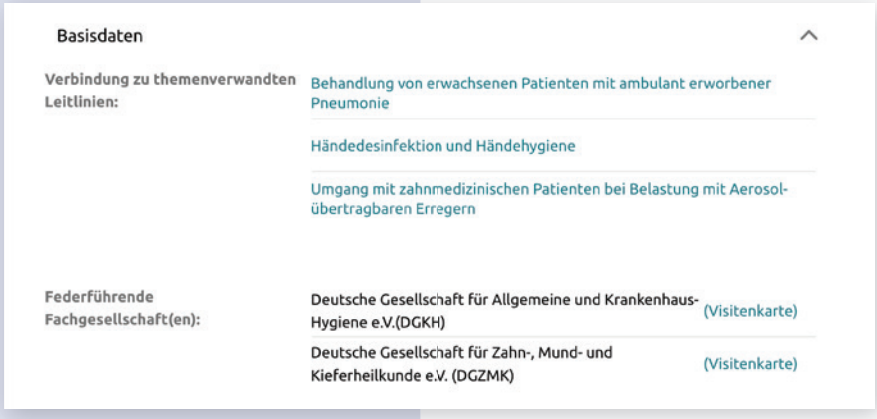
Long-serving chamber consultant for practice management criticises new S2k clinical guideline

More bureaucracy, higher costs, little progress

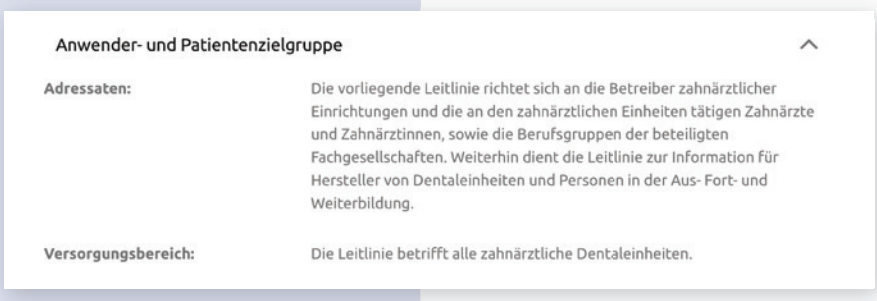
Drawing on the revised S2k guideline "Dental Units—Hygienic Requirements for Water," published in July 2026, we present an example of how a practice management consultant—who works closely with dental practices—assesses and critiques this revision. The individual in question is Dr Michael Rottner, who served as the consultant for practice management at the Dental Chamber from 2002 to 2022.


S2k-Leitlinie Dentaleinheiten, hygienische Anforderungen an das Wasser

Version:	2.1
Stand:	28.02.2026
Gültig bis:	27.02.2031
Aktueller Hinweis:	13.08.2026: redaktionell überarbeite Langfassung (Version 2.1) eingestellt
Verfügbare Dokumente:	
Langfassung der Leitlinie Dentaleinheiten, hygienische Anforderungen an das Wasser	Download


Basisdaten

Verbindung zu themenverwandten Leitlinien:	Behandlung von erwachsenen Patienten mit ambulant erworbener Pneumonie
	Händedesinfektion und Händehygiene
	Umgang mit zahnmedizinischen Patienten bei Belastung mit Aerosol-übertragbaren Erregern
Federführende Fachgesellschaft(en):	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Allgemeine und Krankenhaus-Hygiene e.V.(DGKH) (Visitenkarte)
	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zahn-, Mund- und Kieferheilkunde e.V. (DGZMK) (Visitenkarte)


Anwender- und Patientenzielgruppe

Adressaten:	Die vorliegende Leitlinie richtet sich an die Betreiber zahnärztlicher Einrichtungen und die an den zahnärztlichen Einheiten tätigen Zahnärzte und Zahnärztinnen, sowie die Berufsgruppen der beteiligten Fachgesellschaften. Weiterhin dient die Leitlinie zur Information für Hersteller von Dentaleinheiten und Personen in der Aus- Fort- und Weiterbildung.
Versorgungsbereich:	Die Leitlinie betrifft alle zahnärztliche Dentaleinheiten.

"To a large extent, the guideline follows the previous version, merely responding to legislative changes such as the revised 2023 Drinking Water Ordinance and the EU Medical Devices Regulation. It lacks any original new standards or innovative hygiene concepts. Consequently, the guideline remains reactive rather than future-oriented.

The recommendation to test for Pseudomonas species and viridans streptococci—in addition to the standard parameters for drinking water—is particularly contentious. While these supplementary indicator organisms may be sound from a hygienic perspective, they impose significantly higher costs on operators, including:

- additional laboratory analyses
- more extensive sampling
- an increased documentation burden
- potential remediation measures in the event of concerning findings.

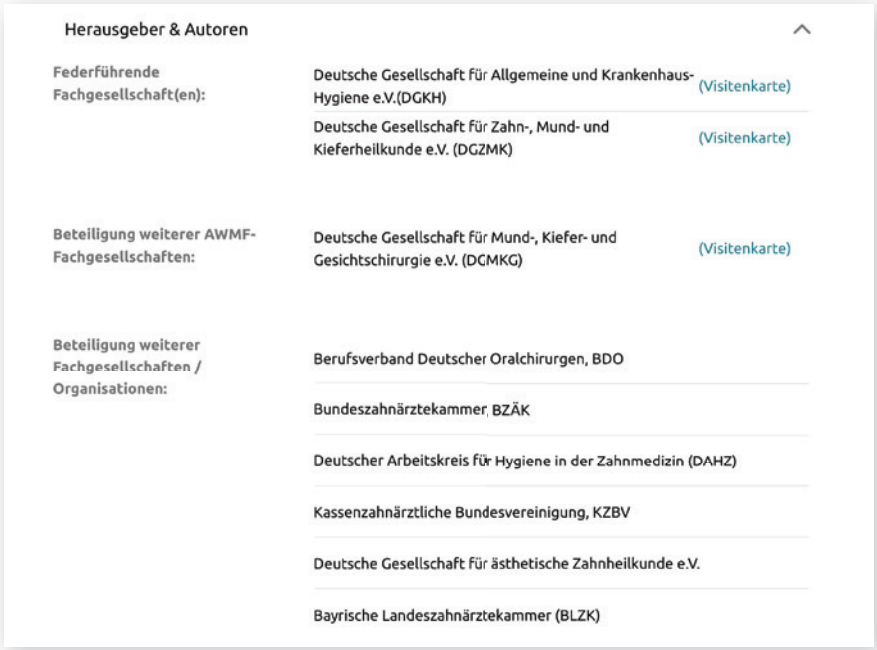
For many practices, this entails a noticeable additional financial burden—not least because the guideline fails to specify clear consequences or sets of measures to be taken upon the detection of these germs.

Although the authors of the guideline themselves emphasise that it is not legally binding, it is used in practice by public health departments, regulatory authorities, and hygiene inspectors as a benchmark. This creates a de facto obligation

that dental practices can hardly afford to ignore. The result: recommendations become requirements, and requirements become cost factors.

Smaller practices are hit particularly hard, as the guidelines mandate extensive flushing, testing, and documentation procedures that are difficult to manage in terms of both staffing and finances. In short: a greater burden with little benefit.

The new S2k guideline fails to deliver any genuine advancement in water hygiene for dental units. Instead, it increases the bureaucratic burden, raises the costs of microbiological testing, and remains conservative in its content.

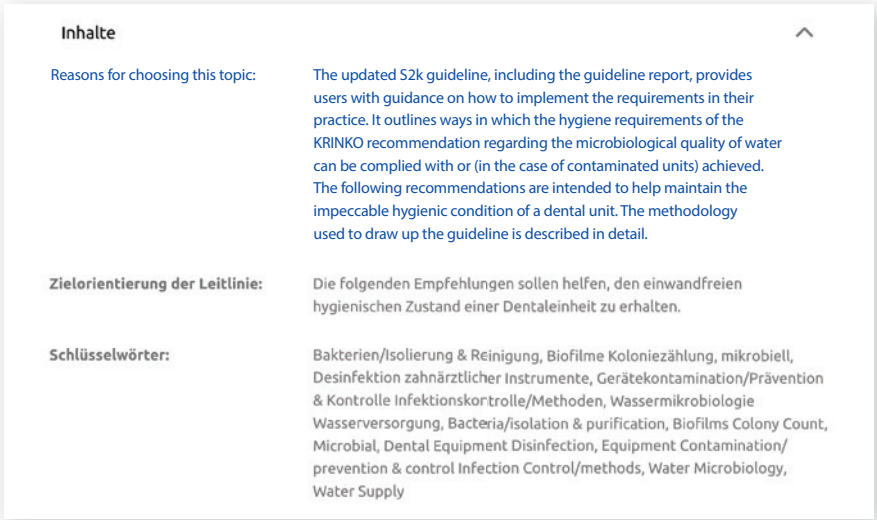


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	Bundeszahnärztekammer, BZÄK	
	Deutscher Arbeitskreis für Hygiene in der Zahnmedizin (DAHZ)	
	Kassenzahnärztliche Bundesvereinigung, KZBV	
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Koordination:	Prof. Dr. Dr. B. Al-Nawas Dr. A. Simonis



Inhalte

Reasons for choosing this topic:	The updated S2k guideline, including the guideline report, provides users with guidance on how to implement the requirements in their practice. It outlines ways in which the hygiene requirements of the KRINKO recommendation regarding the microbiological quality of water can be complied with or (in the case of contaminated units) achieved. The following recommendations are intended to help maintain the impeccable hygienic condition of a dental unit. The methodology used to draw up the guideline is described in detail.
Zielorientierung der Leitlinie:	Die folgenden Empfehlungen sollen helfen, den einwandfreien hygienischen Zustand einer Dentaleinheit zu erhalten.
Schlüsselwörter:	Bakterien/Isolierung & Reinigung, Biofilme Koloniezählung, mikrobiell, Desinfektion zahnärztlicher Instrumente, Gerätekontamination/Prävention & Kontrolle Infektionskontrolle/Methoden, Wassermikrobiologie Wasserversorgung, Bacteria/isolation & purification, Biofilms Colony Count, Microbial, Dental Equipment Disinfection, Equipment Contamination/prevention & control Infection Control/methods, Water Microbiology, Water Supply

The dental profession requires practical, evidence-based, and economically viable hygiene concepts—not guidelines that primarily create additional burdens. The revised version of the guideline goes far beyond the requirements set out in 2014. Based on the theoretical assumption that back-suction could occur through handpieces and contra-angles during patient treatment—potentially leading to contamination of the dental unit—the guideline now mandates additional testing for the microorganisms *Streptococcus viridans* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. It should be noted, however, that for many years, these handpieces, contra-angles, and motors have been equipped with anti-back-suction mechanisms. Furthermore, there have been no reported infections linked to their use. This is, therefore, a purely theoretical risk with absolutely no supporting evidence!"



Dr Michael Rottner
Chamber Consultant for Practice 2002–2022, Regensburg

About the guideline

The S2k guideline "Dental Units—Hygienic Requirements for Water" (register no. 075-002, dated 28 February 2026) is valid until 27 February 2031, and can be viewed here.