

Results of a survey of current work practices and future aspirations of members of the Irish Dental Hygienists Association, relative to their scope of practice

Précis: Dental hygienists are not given the opportunity to use all of their skills, are enthusiastic about the future, and most would like to continue working in a team setting.

Abstract:

Background: Dental hygienists (DHs) in Ireland have a choice regarding undertaking further training to update their skills to the current scope of practice. No data exists in relation to how many DHs have updated their skills, how often they use these new skills and how confident they are in using them.

Purpose of the study: To identify the percentage of DHs who have the full range of skills currently included in the scope of practice for DHs, and how regularly and confidently they are using these skills. It was opportune to also ascertain if DHs have encountered any barriers to using these skills, and their work practice aspirations for the future.

Materials and methods: An online survey was offered to all members of the Irish Dental Hygienists Association in August 2014 (n=189). The survey, which was piloted and revised, contained 13 questions relating to the profile, current work practices and future aspirations of the DHs.

Results: There was a 52% response rate. Most DHs were confident in their ability to carry out their skills. Some 22% had not updated their skills to include block local anaesthesia (LA). A high percentage of DHs reported never or hardly ever using the skills of block LA (40%), dental radiography (62%), placing temporary dressings (73%), or re-fitting crowns (82%). Reasons for not using these skills were provided by the DHs.

Conclusions: DHs rarely use some of their current skills; however, they are still interested in adding more skills to their scope of practice.

Prospective audit of postoperative instructions to patients undergoing root canal treatment in the DDUH and re-audit following introduction of a written patient information sheet

Précis: An audit of the delivery and documentation of postoperative instructions to patients undergoing root canal treatment in the DDUH demonstrated unfavourable results compared to the ideal benchmark. Introduction of a postoperative leaflet significantly improved the content and consistency of the advice and will be implemented in future.

ABSTRACT

Statement of the problem: Concerns were expressed that postoperative written instructions following endodontic treatment are not available in the Dublin Dental University Hospital.

Materials and methods: Data was collected in three phases: retrospective analysis of clinical notes for evidence of the delivery of postoperative instructions; a randomly distributed questionnaire to patients undergoing root canal treatment prior to the introduction of a written postoperative advice sheet; and, another survey following introduction of the advice sheet.

Results: Some 56% of patients' charts documented that postoperative advice was given. Analysis of phase two revealed that patients were not consistently informed of any key postoperative messages. In phase 3 analysis, the proposed benchmarks were met in four out of six categories.

Conclusions: Postoperative advice after root canal treatment in the DDUH is both poorly recorded and inconsistently delivered. A combination of oral postoperative instructions and written postoperative advice provided the most effective delivery of patient information.