



Scope of Practice for Members of the Dental Team

Dental Council of Jamaica

PREAMBLE:

The purpose of this document is to guide the various members of the dental team, on their fundamental role and function as members of the dental profession. This document also seeks to promote the highest levels of ethics and professionalism that is becoming of all dental professionals. As a corollary, each category of dental professionals will subscribe to those ideals that will promote cohesion of the dental team; this professional attribute is critical to providing the utmost levels of patient care.

It is also imperative to note that dental procedures are highly regulated by law and that the prescription in law for the clinical and administrative governance of the dental profession resides with the registered Dentist¹, herein referred to as the Registered Dental Surgeon. Dental Surgeons are therefore vicariously accountable.

Scope of Practice is directly related to the following requirements²:

- a) Educational qualification and training,
- b) Legislative and regulatory requirements
- c) Competence and experience, inclusive of the requirement for continued dental educational credits (CEs) and Continued Professional Development (CPD)
- d) Clinical needs
- e) Professional indemnity
- f) Workplace environment, needs and capacity.

The scope of practice is a simple and logical framework for demonstrating the various roles and functions of each class of dental personnel. It further describes the areas of dentistry, including the level, in which the various classes are trained and competent to perform. It also explains the subject areas in which the various members of the dental team would have expert knowledge, skills and experience to practice safely and effectively³ in the best interests of the patients.

INTRODUCTION:

The Dental Act of Jamaica defines the 'Practice of Dentistry'⁴ as involving the following: a) the performance of any operation, and the treatment of any diseases, deficiencies, or lesions, on or of the human teeth or" jaws, and the correction ofmal-positions thereof and the performance of radiographic work in connection with the human teethor jaws;(b) the giving of any anesthetic' in connection with any operation on the human teeth or jaws; (c) the performance of any operation on, or the giving of any treatment, advice, or attendance to, any person, as preparatory to or for the purpose of or for in connection with the fitting, insertion, fixing, constructing, repairing, or removing of artificial dentures or restorative dental appliances; or (d) the performance of any such operation and the giving of any such treatment, advice, or attendance as is usually performed or given by dentists.

Modern Dentistry is practice in a team approach, with various members of the dental team performing certain regulated functions as it relates to patient-care. The team approach to dentistry promotes continuity of care that is comprehensive, convenient, costeffective and efficient². In Jamaica, the Dental team comprises of regulated, enrolled and unregulated members, namely: The Registered Dentist, Enrolled Dental Nurses, Enrolled Dental Hygienists, Enrolled Dental Technician and the unregulated Dental Assistants. The Dental Surgeon is the de facto head of the Dental Team and is appropriately qualified to lead the dental team. The following are recognized qualification for Dental Surgeons:

- 1) DMD –the Doctor of Medical Dentistry otherwise called the Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) degree,
- 2) Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree,
- 3) Licentiate of Dental Surgery (LDS),
- 4) Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)

The Dental Surgeon leadership is based on the fact that the Dental Surgeon is a highly qualified and trained professional in all aspects of Dentistry; the Dental Surgeon is competent to comprehensively and critically assess, diagnose, evaluate, treatment plan and appropriately treat patients of all ages with various co-morbidities, physical & mental and developmental challenges.

It is imperative to note that only a Registered Dental Surgeon has oversight for clinical and administrative governance for the various members of the dental team, as it is critical to ensuring patient safety and the effective delivery of oral healthcare. However, it is often misconstrued that Dentists are not required to oversee certain routine procedures such as cleaning, tooth extractions, preparing and placing fillings or administering local anesthesia¹; procedures that other members of the dental team are trained to carry out. Nevertheless, it must be noted that even those simple or routine procedures may have certain inherent risks of complications due to underlying medical conditions of the patients, conditions which may not be immediately obvious to the untrained eyes, which are beyond the competencies of the Dental Auxiliaries, such as infection(s), temporary or even permanent nerve damage, prolonged bleeding, hematomas and pain¹.

1.0 Dental Assistants

Dental Assistants are at present not required to be regulated but they are considered essential members of the dental team. The Dental Assistants primarily provide clinical and other support to Dental Surgeons, Dental Hygienists and Dental Nurse.

Dental Assistants are indemnified to provide supportive services to members of Dental Team by working under the supervision of a registered Dental Surgeons; they are able to undertake the following procedure if they are trained and competent:

- a) Prepare and maintain the dental clinical environment, including the equipment;
- b) Carry out infection prevention and control procedures to prevent physical, chemical and microbiological contamination in the dentalsurgery and/or laboratory;
- c) Record dental charting and oral tissue assessment carried out by other members of the Dental Team, namely the Dental Surgeons, Dental Hygienists and Dental Nurse/Therapists;
- d) Prepare, mix and handle dental/bio-materials;
- e) Provide chair side support to the dental operators duringtreatment;
- f) Keep full, accurate and contemporaneous patient medical and dental records;
- g) Prepare equipment, materials and patients for dental radiography
- h) Process dental radiographs
- i) Monitor, support and reassure patients

- j) Provide appropriate patient advice
- k) Support the patient and their colleagues if there is a medical emergency

Senior Dental Assistants may possess additional skills, which would or may include the following:

- a) Further skills in the delivery of oral health education and oral health promotion (Oral Health Educator);
- b) Assisting in the treatment of patients who are under conscious sedation (Nitrous Oxide Sedation Assistants);
- c) Further skills in assisting in the treatment of patients with special needs (Special Needs Assistants);
- d) Further skills in assisting in the treatment of orthodontic patients (Orthodontic Assistants)
- e) Intra and extra-oral photography
- f) Pouring, casting and trimming study models
- g) Shade taking
- h) Tracing cephalographs

Additional skills carried out on prescription from, or only under the direct supervision of a Registered Dental Surgeon:

- a) Taking panoramic and cephalometric radiographs
- b) Placing rubber dam
- c) Measuring and recording plaque indices
- d) Removing sutures after the wound has been checked by a Dental Surgeon
- e) Constructing occlusal registration rims and special trays
- f) Repairing the acrylic component of removable appliances
- g) Applying topical anesthetic to the prescription of a dentist
- h) Constructing mouth guards and bleaching trays to the prescription of a Dental Surgeon
- i) Constructing vacuum formed retainers to the prescription of a Dental Surgeon
- j) Taking impressions to the prescription of a Dental Surgeon

Dental Assistant in the Government Dental Services can apply fluoride varnish either on prescription from a Dental Surgeon or by a direction as part of a structured public dental health programme.

Limitations

Dental Assistants do not diagnose disease or treatment plan patients.

All other skills are reserved to the operating Dental Auxiliaries (Dental Hygienists and Dental Nurses) and the Dental Surgeons.

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2.0 DENTAL NURSES

Dental Nurses are enrolled members of the Dental Profession, who are licensed to perform certain items of dental treatment only under the direction and supervision of a Registered Dental Surgeon, to children within the School-based Oral Health Programme of the Ministry of Health & Wellness.

Dental Nurses are trained and competent to provide the following services:

- a) Obtain dental history from patients and evaluate their medical history within the scope of their competence and training;
- b) Carry out limited clinical examination of teeth and gums within their competence;
- c) Assessment and treatment planning based on their competence
- d) Take diagnostic quality radiographs
- e) Take and process various film views, such as bitewings and periapical radiographs only, used in general dental practice
- f) Plan the delivery of care for patients in consultation with the Dental Surgeons

- g) Give appropriate patient advice
- h) Plan and deliver oral health educational sessions to children, women's group and communities.
- i) Provide over the counter medication to patients on the advice of the Dentists.
- j) Provide preventive oral care to patients and liaise with dentists over the treatment of patients that is within their competence.
- k) Undertake supragingival scaling using manual and powered instruments
- l) Use appropriate anti-microbial therapy to manage plaque related diseases
- m) Apply topical treatments and fissures sealants
- n) Give infiltration and inferior dental block analgesia
- o) Carry out direct restorations on primary and secondary teeth
- p) Extract primary teeth, only the portion that is above the gum.
- q) Keep full, accurate and contemporaneous patient records
- r) If working on prescription, vary the detail but not the direction of the prescription according to patient needs. For example the number of surfaces to be restored or the material to be used.

Restrictions:

- a) Dental Nurses work only under the supervision and direction of a Registered Dentist.
- b) Dental Nurses work only in the Public Services.
- c) Dental Nurses do not carry out periodontal, endodontics, prosthetic and orthodontic treatment for any patients
- d) Dental Nurses cannot own or operate a private dental facility.

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3.0 DENTAL HYGIENISTS

Dental Hygienists are enrolled members of the dental professional, who are licensed to perform certain dental procedures; they operate only under the supervision of the Registered Dental Surgeon. Dental Hygienists help patients maintain their oral health by preventing and treating periodontal disease and promoting good oral health practice. They carry out treatment direct to patients under prescription from a dentist.

Dental Hygienist, are licensed to perform or undertake the following procedures, listed below, within the scope of their competency (Dental Hygienists are indemnified under the supervisory authority of the supervising Dentist):

- a) Provide dental hygiene care to a wide range of patients;
- b) Obtain dental history from patients and evaluate their medical history within the scope of competence;
- c) Carry out a clinical examination within their competence;
- d) Complete periodontal examination and charting and use indices to screen and monitor periodontal disease;
- e) Assess and treatment plan patients in concurrence with the Dental Surgeon;
- f) Take and process various film views used in general dental practice;
- g) Plan the delivery of care for patients;
- h) Give appropriate patient advice;
- i) Provide preventive oral care to patients and liaise with dentists over the treatment of periodontal disease;
- j) Undertake supragingival and sub-gingival scaling and root surface debridement using manual and powered instruments;
- k) Use appropriate anti-microbial therapy to manage plaque related diseases;

- l) Apply topical treatments and fissuresealants;
- m) Give patients advice on how to stop smoking;
- n) Take intra and extra-oral photographs;
- o) Give infiltration and inferior dental blockanalgesia;
- p) Take impressions;
- q) Care of implants and treatment ofperi-implant tissues;
- r) Keep full, accurate and contemporaneouspatient records;
- s) If working on prescription, vary the detail but not the direction of the prescription according to patient needs;

Additional skills which dental hygienists might develop include:

- Tooth whitening to the prescription of a dentist
- Administering inhalation sedation under the direct supervision of a Registered Dentist
- Removing sutures after the wound has been checked by a Dentist

Dental Hygienists do not:

- a) Restore teeth;
- b) Carry out pulp treatments;
- c) Adjust unrestored surfaces;
- d) Extract teeth.
- e) Own and/or operate a private dental facility.

Other skills are reserved to orthodonticassistants, dental technicians, clinical dentaltechnicians or dentists.

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4.0 ENROLLED DENTAL TECHNICIANS

Dental Technician work by way of a prescription from a Registered Dental Surgeon.

The Enrolled Dental Technicians are licensed to carry out the following functions:

- a) Review dental prosthetic cases coming into the laboratory and to decide how best they should be progressed.
- b) Work with the Dental Surgeon on treatment planning and outline designs for various types of dental devices and prostheses.
- c) Design, plan and make a range of custom-made dental devices according to a prescription
- d) Modify dental devices including dentures, orthodontic appliances, crowns and bridges according to a prescription.
- e) Carry out shade taking.
- f) Carry out infection prevention and control procedures to prevent physical, chemical and microbiological contamination in the laboratory.
- g) Keep full and accurate laboratory records.
- h) Verify and take responsibility for the quality and safety of devices leaving a laboratory
- i) Working with a Dentist in the clinic, assisting with treatment by helping to fit attachments at chairside.
- j) Working under the direct supervision of a Registered Dentist in the clinic, assisting with treatment by:
 - i. Taking impressions
 - ii. Recording face bows
 - iii. Carrying out intra-oral and extra-oral tracing
 - iv. Carrying out implant frame assessments
 - v. Recording occlusal registrations
 - vi. Tracing cephalographs
 - vii. Carrying out intra-oral scanning for CAD/CAM
 - viii. Taking intra and extra-oral photographs.

Dental Technicians do not work independently in the clinic to:

- a) perform clinical procedures related to providing removable dental appliances
- b) carry out independent clinical examinations

- c) identify abnormal oral mucosa and related underlying structures
- d) fit removable appliances
- e) extract and clean teeth
- f) own and operate a private clinical dental facility.

Dental Technicians do not provide treatment for or give advice to patients in the ways that are described under the sections for Dental Hygienists, Dental Nurses and Dental Surgeons.

Dental Technicians are capable of owning and operating a Dental Laboratory facility only.

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5.0 DENTISTS / DENTAL SURGEONS


Dentists can carry out all of the treatments listed in this document. As a registered member of the profession of dentistry, Dentists can also undertake the following if they are trained, competent and indemnified:

- a) Diagnosing oral diseases, as well as other co-morbidities.
- b) Promoting oral health and disease prevention.
- c) Prepare and/or create comprehensive treatment plans to maintain or restore the oral health of their patients.
- d) Prescribe and interpret radiographs and other diagnostic tests, inclusive of blood studies, chemistry, pathology and others
- e) Ensuring the safe administration of anesthetics.
- f) Monitoring growth and development of the teeth and jaws.
- g) Performing surgical procedures on the teeth, bone and soft tissues of the oral cavity.
- h) Prescribe and provide endodontic treatment

- i) Prescribe and provide fixed and removable orthodontic treatment
- j) Prescribe and provide fixed and removable prostheses
- k) Carry out oral surgery
- l) Carry out periodontal surgery
- m) Extraction of teeth
- n) Prescribe and provide crowns and bridges
- o) Provide conscious sedation
- p) Carry out treatment on patients who are under general anesthesia
- q) Prescribe medicines as part of dental treatment

Additional skills and competencies which a Dentist could develop, based on further prescribed training:

- a) Providing implants
- b) Providing non-surgical cosmetic injectable
- c) Comprehensive orthodontic treatment
- d) Complex Endodontic Surgeries
- e) Complex Periodontal Surgeries
- f) Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Signed  Date: 27/2/2021
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3. Dental Act of Jamaica.
4. British Dental Council, 2020