

# Dental hygienist research paper examples

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## **Job Description**

Dental hygienists deliver dental care by inspecting oral tissues of a patient. They look at the overall health of a dental patient in order to ascertain the presence or absence of any form of diseases (Institute for Career Research 2005). The findings that dental hygienists come up with form the basis for formulating clinical procedures meant to treat various ailments. Dental hygienists are also required to administer of laboratory diagnostic tests. The tests results are handed over to dentists for interpretation. Dental hygienists educate patients on the methods and steps that they can take in order to attain oral hygiene and prevent various dental diseases. Moreover, dental hygienists are also responsible for the evaluation of outcomes of educational approaches that they have adopted with a certain clientele group or the society that they serve. Dental hygienists are also required to make a follow up on the outcome of the clinical procedures that they instituted to patients and consequently advise patients appropriately.

Dental hygienists can also carry out a diverse range of clinical procedures. However, these clinical procedures must be carried out under the supervisor of a dentist. One of the procedures commonly carried out by dental hygienists is the removal of plaque that has accumulated on due to the patient's negligence or the inability to remove the plaque. Dental hygienists also remove stains that emanate from water or foods that patients consume. Dental hygienists are also allowed to remove accumulated calculus, expose and process dental x-rays, and apply preventive material to avoid the formation and aggravation of cavities. Dental hygienists can apply antimicrobial agents on teeth to avoid foul breath. In some states, dental

hygienists play the role of administering local anesthetics during surgical procedures (Institute for Career Research, 2005). Since this is applicable in different states, the curriculum for the course may vary from one state to another. Dental hygienists are trained to carry out procedures in placing and curving out filling materials in cases of tooth decay. The other procedure that they carry out is periodontal dressing by performing follow up procedures on periodontal that have been carried dentists. Follow up procedures include removal of sutures that arise from previous surgical procedures. Lastly, dental hygienists are allowed to carry out root planning. This is a part of therapeutically procedures which is another category of periodontal hygiene.

## **Education and certification**

The entry requirement for dental hygienists is an associate degree in dental hygiene. Dental hygienists also need a practicing certificate by an accredited body. To receive accreditation, dental hygienists need to have attained informal training apprenticeship under an experienced professional who is an authority in the field in his or her own right. The apprenticeship program is referred to as an internship or a registrar course. Therefore, dental hygienists need to have formal training from a tertiary institution and informal training obtained through apprenticeship in order to be allowed to practice. High school students who are interested in becoming dental hygienists need to undertake courses in chemistry, biology, and mathematics.

Training by dental hygienists may cover a period ranging from 2-6 years. The training, both formal and informal, imparts relevant skills to dental hygienists. Most courses that dental hygienist undertake are in the field of

dentistry and medicine. These courses contain information and techniques that are needed for the diagnosis and treatment of dental diseases. The knowledge covers symptoms, drug properties and interactions, preventive measures of the conditions and the different modes of treatment that can be applied in specific cases. Dental hygienists are also taught human psychology. Human psychology is the study of human thinking and performance. It should be appreciated that dental hygienist work in the service industry. Understanding the psychology that underlies the actions of people is instrumental in the effective delivery of the dental hygiene services to clients.

Every state in the U. S. A requires that dental hygienists must be licensed in order to practice. The requirements for obtaining a practicing license differ from one state to another. This is because dental hygienists the scope of functions performed by dental hygienists differs from one state to another. For example, in some states, dental hygienists play the role of administering local anesthetics during surgical procedures. However, in most states to receive a practicing license dental hygienist require an associate degree from an accredited institution. They are also required to pass both practical and written examination.

## **Employment**

According to statistics from the United States department of labor, the number of people that were employed as dental hygienists was 181, 800 in 2010. The field has a high growth potential. There is a high growth in demand for dental hygienist not only in the U. S. A but also across the world. The average rate of growth of job opportunities for dental hygienist in the U.

S. A was 38 per cent in 2010, which way above the above the job market average. The job openings for dental hygienist that are likely to occur in a period of ten years from 2010-2020 are projected at 68, 500. These jobs are in the health care and social care sectors. The median wages for dental hygienist in the U. S. A is estimated to be \$68, 250 per annum or \$33. 81 per hour. Employment opportunities for dental hygienist also exist in other medicine related fields. Some of these fields include the radiology, dental assistance, diagnostic and medical sonography, and pharmacy technicians among others (Institute for Career Research, 2005). The ability of dental professionals to adapt in other field is an added advantage for dental hygienists because they have a wide scope of possibilities that they can use in the quest for career start and advancement. The requirement for most vacancies in the dental hygiene field is at least an associate degree and informal training in dental hygiene. Experience is not always a requirement in most vacancies because all dental hygienists have informal training that gives them practical experience. Dental hygienists also have the chance of advancing the careers by enrolling for higher degrees in postgraduate schools.

## **Professional Activities**

There are various dental hygienists associations, journal and groups that provide information on dental hygiene and provide current and prospective dental hygienists a chance to network. The American Dental Hygiene Association (ADHA) has detailed information on dental hygiene including current trends, publications, licensure requirement in various states, education and careers, news and scholarships. It also provides a platform for

members to network. Students who are enrolled in a dental hygiene program are allowed to enroll at an annual subscription of \$65. Upon graduated, dental hygienists are allowed free active membership as long as they have a valid practicing certificate. The American Dental Association does not provide membership to students. However, practicing dental hygienists can obtain associate membership at an annual membership fee of \$ 131. The ADA website has a lot of information that is accessible by the public for free including; licensure requirement in various states, education and careers, news and scholarships.

## **Conclusion**

The profession is suitable for any student that is taking a course related in the medical field as well as nursing. My childhood dream was to be a dental hygienist. Therefore, a career in dental hygiene will give me personal satisfaction. Besides, I will happy to work in an environment where I interact directly with patients. A career in dental hygiene involves working with people. The satisfaction originates from the capability to form lasting and trusting relationships with patients. It is an also a source of prestige, this is because it is a highly skilled profession. The other reason that makes the profession suit me is the variety. This is because the course exposes the professional to a myriad of opportunities that are not existent in the other courses in the medical field. A career in dental hygiene will allow me to be creative. The reasoning behind this is that the patient management and oral health education calls for diversity in the approaches according to patients and the audience in the case of health education. Lastly, the numerous opportunities in the field for fresh graduates since there is a shortage of

dental hygienists in the U. S. A. Besides, the salary that dental hygienist earn is very attractive.

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