Career paths and opportunities for the Dental Assistant

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Session overview

- Career pathways for the qualified Dental Assistant (Certificate III)
- Why further training is encouraged
- Rationale for Dental Assistants delivering oral health promotion
- Health promotion and the role of the Dental Assistant (Cert IV)
- Dental radiography skill set for the Dental Assistant
Why Certificate IV?

- Nationally recognized and accredited qualification
- Career progression within the private and public dental sectors
- Expansion of work role
- Deep underpinning knowledge of theoretical concepts
- New clinical skills to support the dental practitioner
- Ability to analyse and evaluate information
- Leadership and supervision of others
- Well developed communication skills
- Enhanced problem solving skills
- Increased job satisfaction
Government policy strategy

Australia's National Health plan 2004-2013: *healthy mouths healthy lives*

- increase "team dentistry" across the range of dental and oral health professionals and greater integration of cross practitioner education
- increase the utilisation of the dental therapist/hygienist workforce to increase the capacity for primary and maintenance oral health care including health promotion
- more effective use of the existing workforce, for example, dental assistants providing oral health education and oral radiography


Government policy strategy


- Build partnerships and environments that support good oral health
- Improve oral health literacy
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention
- Improve oral health promotion skills within the workforce
The Certificate IV Dental Assistant with Oral Health Promotion: *complementing the job roles of other oral health professionals*…

Oral health therapist/Dental hygienist/Dental therapist/Dental Assistant:

1. **Prevent** and provide treatment for the most common oral diseases

2. **Promote** the dental team concept towards the achievement of good oral health

3. **Assist** in making dental services accessible and affordable to the community

4. Promote good oral health practices to community groups through oral health promotion activities

5. Provide support and education on oral health promotion to allied health care workers
The Certificate IV Dental Assistant with Oral Health Promotion skills can….

- **Contribute** to improving patients’ access to evidenced based preventive oral care for good health and wellbeing
- **Supplement** the team approach to integrating dental care with client-focused oral health education
- **Reinforce** health messages prescribed by the dental practitioner
- Provide a **cost effective** model towards motivating and monitoring the client’s oral care
- **Assist** in the team approach to strengthening the promotion of oral health messages across the population reflecting the goals of regional and local community health plans
- **Collaborate** with other allied health professionals to assist in oral health education programs
Part of an effective team approach to support and promote good oral health outcomes ……

- Individual client in the dental setting
- Clients, carers and workers in the disability sector
- Residential aged care
- Community health: low income and social disadvantage
- Indigenous health care sector
- Allied health services
- Non English speaking groups including refugees
- Preschool
- Primary and secondary schools
- Maternal health services
Certificate IV Dental Assistant : Oral Health Promotion

The job description

- **Chairside education:**
  - *To whom?*
    - Children and their families
    - Adolescents
    - Adults
    - Pregnant women
    - Elderly
    - Special needs
  - Health behaviour modification (motivational interview)
  - Patient behaviour modification (tell-show-do)
Certificate IV Dental Assistant : Oral Health Promotion

The job description

- Client and target group education
- Oral diseases (dental caries, including early childhood caries & periodontal diseases)
- Diagnostic saliva testing
- Plaque disclosing
- Diet analysis & counseling
- Oral hygiene strategies (tooth and interdental cleaning)
- Smoking cessation strategies
- Preventive strategies (fluorides, toothpastes, mouth rinses)
- Care of fixed & removable prosthesis and ortho appliances
- Oral health care planning
- Preventing sports injuries
Certificate IV Dental Assistant : Oral Health Promotion

The job description

- Implement oral health programs

  - Provide presentations and resources promoting health messages to a wide range of target groups and community settings:
    - Early childhood services
    - Residential aged care
    - Disability
    - Schools
    - Culturally diverse communities
    - Community sports clubs
  - Supporting and collaborating with other allied health professionals
Further career progression

Certificate III in Dental Assisting

Certificate IV in Dental Assisting (Dental Radiography)

Advanced Diploma of Oral Health (Dental Hygiene)
The Certificate IV Dental Assistant with the Dental Radiography skill set

• Highly trained to produce intra oral and extra oral radiographic images for patients, under the prescription of a dental practitioner
• Licensed in Victoria (Dept. of Health, State Government of Victoria)
• Time efficient, patient-centred care approach in supporting the dental practitioner within the clinical setting
Advanced Diploma of Oral Health (Dental Hygiene)

- Program commenced @ RMIT 2013
- 2 years full time study load
- Accredited by the Australian Dental Council
- Registered Dental Practitioner: Dental Hygienist
- Private and public dental sectors
Any questions....

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