

14/05/2018

TO: Dental Board of Australia

This is my submission in regards to removal of supervision and giving unlimited self- directed scope of practice to all mid-level providers. I believe that there is a reason that we go to University to study dentistry for 5 years and that is not just for getting a certificate at the end of the degree. We do a lot of study both in theory and practical components of dentistry. Finally, we are taught and equipped with the basic dental skills to start practicing as a general dentist.

Dentistry is a vast sea of knowledge and no student is completely prepared for clinical practice after graduation. Technology is forever changing and if we are not actively investing our time in continuous professional development we are definitely left behind. As a dentist myself, I find that materials and techniques are getting outdated at a rapid rate and if I am not consciously taking the time to learn and find out, it's a struggle keeping up with the ever changing fore-front of dentistry. This is after 5 years of full time study at university level.

Mid-level providers such as Oral Hygienists and Oral therapists have achieved their qualifications either through university or Tafe courses. Some of these courses range in duration from anywhere from one year to three years. I don't believe this is anywhere enough time to learn all the facets of dentistry or equips the professional to be all rounded dental providers and to provide optimal quality of dental care to patients.

In order to have unlimited self-directed scope of practice, it is important for a dental provider to be trained accordingly with minimum of 5 years at university level study in dentistry. This should include preclinical training and clinical training on patients under supervision. Once competency in all aspects of dentistry is obtained only then is it safe to provide treatments of all natures.

I hope this letter is proof that by removing supervision and giving unlimited practice to the mid- level providers that we are putting patients at risk of their health and dental needs. Optimal quality of care cannot be achieved with minimal study or short course training. I hope the DBA seriously rethinks its decision and realises the risks at stake as well danger to the public. Dentists are the best providers for unlimited scope of practice and let's keep it that way

Thank you for your time in reading this letter.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Shilpa Gupta (BDS UQ)