

From: [REDACTED]
To: [dentalboardconsultation](#)
Subject: Scope of practice and changes to hygienist and prosthetist registration
Date: Wednesday, 19 June 2013 11:42:00 AM

Dear Sirs,

I write to voice my concern about the proposed changes in registration for hygienists and prosthetists. The fallout from this kind of change to our dental profession would be catastrophic.

Dentists undergo four to five years training, involving studies of anatomy, material science, pharmacology, pathology, physiology, medicine, as part of their dental education, such that we are equipped to deal with patients with medical conditions, medical compromise, and perform procedures that take into account the health of our patients. Dentists enter a course through the highest band of high school grades, or a credit or distinction average in their undergraduate degree for post graduate courses.

A hygienist and prosthetists can enter via a diploma, they don't even have to finish high school, they don't need to have a high academic score, because their responsibilities are much less, they are only required to do a limited number of procedures, and they rely on the supervision of a dentist to pick up any disease and make diagnoses.

A hygienist is not trained as a dentist.

A prosthetist is not trained as a dentist.

A hygienist could scale and clean a patient's teeth, but not be aware of a white lesion that is the precursor to oral cancer because they are not trained to pick up such disease.

A prosthetist can make a set of dentures, but not know how to read an xray what shows the patient has an underlying bone disease that is life threatening.

The medicolegal implications are huge, and the cost to our community in misdiagnosis, missed diagnosis, wrong treatment, or inadequate treatment, are just too much to comprehend.

The dental board, as the governing board of health professionals, should have more sense in protecting patient's welfare, it is the health and the well being of our community at risk.

If the dental board go ahead with these changes, the future of good dental practice is seriously compromised.

I import the board to reconsider this proposal, and sit down with us from the dental profession to discuss a better resolution.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Cecilia So
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