

Educational Competencies

Domains

The dental hygiene program's educational competencies determine the core content of the curriculum, in which four general domains define the foundations on which the dental hygiene profession is based on:

1. Professionalisms and Ethics
2. Dental Hygiene Process of Care
3. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
4. Professional Commitment and Advancement

Major Competencies

The domains are built upon the major competencies that students are expected to acquire by the time they graduate and focus on the ability to progressively perform certain services or tasks:

1. Professionalisms and Ethics
 - a. Professional Behavior
 - b. Ethical Behavior
 - c. Problem Solving and Decision Making
2. Dental Hygiene Process of Care
 - a. Assessment
 - b. Diagnosis
 - c. Planning
 - d. Implementation
 - e. Evaluation
 - f. Documentation
3. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
 - a. Education and Communication
 - b. Community Involvement
4. Professional Commitment and Advancement
 - a. Professional Commitment
 - b. Professional Advancement

Supporting Competencies

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1. Professionalisms and Ethics

a. Professional Behavior

- i. Apply ethical reasoning to dental hygiene and practice with professional integrity.
- ii. Maintain honesty in interpersonal relationships with patients, colleagues, and other professionals.
- iii. Adhere to all policies and guidelines as stated in the college catalog and dental hygiene program manual.

b. Ethical Behavior

- i. Comply with state and federal laws governing the practice of dentistry and dental hygiene.
- ii. Provide humane and compassionate care without discrimination to all patients.
- iii. Ensure confidentiality regarding all aspects of patient treatment.

c. Problem Solving and Decision Making

- i. Solve problems and make decisions based on accepted scientific principles.
- ii. Critically analyze published reports of oral health research and apply this information to the practice of dental hygiene.
- iii. Evaluate the safety and efficacy of oral health products, interventions, and treatments.
- iv. Communicate professional knowledge verbally and in writing to patients, colleagues, and other professionals.
- v. Demonstrate self-assessment skills and commit to lifelong learning in order to provide current clinical care.
- vi. Assume responsibility and accountability for dental hygiene actions and services.

2. Dental Hygiene Process of Care

a. Assessment

- i. Obtain, review, and update a complete medical, family, psychological, and dental history, including an assessment of vital signs while recognizing cultural differences in population.
 - ii. Manage the patient record as a legal document and maintain its accuracy and consistency.
 - iii. Determine medical conditions that require special precautions or considerations prior to or during dental hygiene treatment.
 - iv. Identify the patient/client at risk for a medical emergency, manage in a manner that prevents an emergency, and handle the emergency should it occur during an appointment.
 - v. Perform an extraoral and intraoral examination and accurately record the findings.
 - vi. Perform a comprehensive examination using clinical, radiographic, periodontal, dental charting and other data collection procedures to assess the patient's/client's needs.
- b. Diagnosis
- i. Recognize the need for referral to the appropriate health professional.
 - ii. Use assessment findings, etiologic factors, and critical data in determining a dental hygiene diagnosis.
- c. Planning
- i. Determine priorities and establish oral health goals with the patient/family and/or guardian as an active participant.
 - ii. Acknowledge cultural differences in population when planning treatment.
 - iii. Establish a planned sequence of educational and clinical services based on the dental hygiene diagnosis using a problem-based approach.
 - iv. Communicate the plan for dental hygiene services to other health care professionals for continuity of care.
- d. Implementation
- i. Use standard precautions.
 - ii. Expose, process, and interpret diagnostic radiographs as needed.
 - iii. Apply basic and advanced principles of dental hygiene instrumentation without causing trauma or harm.
 - iv. Control pain and anxiety during treatment through the use of accepted clinical techniques and appropriate behavioral management strategies.

- v. Select and administer the appropriate preventive and/or chemotherapeutic (antimicrobial) agent and provide pre- and post-treatment instructions.
- vi. Identify policies and engage in procedures for increasing safety in the dental environment.

e. Evaluation

- i. Determine the clinical outcomes of dental hygiene interventions using indices, instruments, examination techniques, and establish the appropriate maintenance schedule.
- ii. Determine the patient's/client's satisfaction with the dental hygiene care received and the oral health status achieved.
- iii. Recommend an appropriate interval for oral health care maintenance.
- iv. Provide subsequent treatment and referrals based on the evaluation findings.

f. Documentation

- i. Obtain the patient's/client's informed consent based on a thorough case presentation.
- ii. Document the patient's/client's consent or refusal in the patient's/client's permanent health record.
- iii. Document all components and evidence of the dental hygiene process of care as a risk management strategy.

3. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

a. Education and Communication

- i. Promote preventive health behaviors by personally maintaining good oral and general health.
- ii. Identify the health needs of individuals and assist them in the development of an appropriate and individualized self-care regimen.

b. Community Involvement

- i. Assess, plan, implement, and evaluate community-based oral health programs.
- ii. Use screening, referral, and education to bring consumers into the health care delivery system.
- iii. Provide dental hygiene services in a variety of settings.

d. Professional Commitment and Advancement

1. Professional Commitment

- i. Participate in professional growth opportunities through affiliation with professional organizations, and/or leadership and service activities.
 - ii. Model the roles of the dental hygienists as defined by the ADHA.
 - iii. Promote the values of the profession to the community outside of dentistry.
2. Professional Advancement
 - i. Pursue life-long learning to enhance the advancement of the dental hygiene profession.
 - ii. Evaluate professional issues and scientific literature in order to make evidence-based decisions that advance the profession of dental hygiene.

Foundational Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

The foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes are taught in the different didactic and laboratory courses and in clinical instructions and include the ADEA competencies developed specifically for entry into the dental hygiene profession.

Dental Hygiene Entry-Level Competencies

Core Competencies

1. Apply a professional code of ethics in all endeavors.
2. Adhere to state and federal laws, recommendations, and regulations in the provision of oral health care.
3. Use critical thinking skills and comprehensive problem-solving to identify oral health care strategies that promote patient health and wellness.
4. Use evidence-based decision making to evaluate emerging technology and treatment modalities to integrate into patient dental hygiene care plans to achieve high-quality, cost-effective care.
5. Assume responsibility for professional actions and care based on accepted scientific theories, research, and the accepted standard of care.
6. Continuously perform self-assessment for lifelong learning and professional growth.
7. Integrate accepted scientific theories and research into educational, preventive, and therapeutic oral health services.
8. Promote the values of the dental hygiene profession through service-based activities, positive community affiliations, and active involvement in local organizations.
9. Apply quality assurance mechanisms to ensure continuous commitment to accepted standards of care.
10. Communicate effectively with diverse individuals and groups, serving all persons without discrimination by acknowledging and appreciating diversity.
11. Record accurate, consistent, and complete documentation of oral health services provided.

12. Initiate a collaborative approach with all patients when developing individualized care plans that are specialized, comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and acceptable to all parties involved in care planning. C.13 Initiate consultations and collaborations with all relevant health care providers to facilitate optimal treatments.
13. Manage medical emergencies by using professional judgment, providing life support, and utilizing required CPR and any specialized training or knowledge.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

1. Promote positive values of overall health and wellness to the public and organizations within and outside the profession.
2. Respect the goals, values, beliefs, and preferences of all patients.
3. Refer patients who may have physiological, psychological, or social problems for comprehensive evaluation.
4. Identify individual and population risk factors, and develop strategies that promote health-related quality of life.
5. Evaluate factors that can be used to promote patient adherence to disease prevention or health maintenance strategies.
6. Utilize methods that ensure the health and safety of the patient and the oral health professional in the delivery of care.

Community Involvement

1. Assess the oral health needs and services of the community to determine action plans and availability of resources to meet the health care needs.
2. Provide screening, referral, and educational services that allow patients to access the resources of the health care system.
3. Provide community oral health services in a variety of settings.
4. Facilitate patient access to oral health services by influencing individuals or organizations for the provision of oral health care.
5. Evaluate reimbursement mechanisms and their impact on the patient's access to oral health care.
6. Evaluate the outcomes of community-based programs, and plan for future activities.
7. Advocate for effective oral health care for underserved populations.

Patient Care

Assessment

1. collect, analyze, and record diagnostic data on the general, oral, and psychosocial health status of a variety of patients using methods consistent with medicolegal principles.

2. Recognize predisposing and etiologic risk factors that require intervention to prevent disease. PC.3 Recognize the relationships among systemic disease, medications, and oral health that impact overall patient care and treatment outcomes.
3. Identify patients at risk for a medical emergency, and manage the patient care in a manner that prevents an emergency. Dental Hygiene Diagnosis
4. Use patient assessment data, diagnostic technologies, and critical decision making skills to determine a dental hygiene diagnosis, a component of the dental diagnosis, to reach conclusions about the patient's dental hygiene care needs.

Planning

1. Utilize reflective judgment in developing a comprehensive patient dental hygiene care plan.
2. Collaborate with the patient and other health professionals as indicated to formulate a comprehensive dental hygiene care plan that is patient-centered and based on the best scientific evidence and professional judgment.
3. Make referrals to professional colleagues and other health care professionals as indicated in the patient care plan.
4. Obtain the patient's informed consent based on a thorough case presentation.

Implementation

1. Provide specialized treatment that includes educational, preventive, and therapeutic services designed to achieve and maintain oral health. Partner with the patient in achieving oral health goals.

Evaluation

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the provided services, and modify care plans as needed.
2. Determine the outcomes of dental hygiene interventions using indices, instruments, examination techniques, and patient self-reports as specified in patient goals.
3. Compare actual outcomes to expected outcomes, reevaluating goals, diagnoses, and services when expected outcomes are not achieved.

Professional Growth and Development

1. Pursue career opportunities within health care, industry, education, research, and other roles as they evolve for the dental hygienist.
2. Develop practice management and marketing strategies to be used in the delivery of oral health care.
3. Access professional and social networks to pursue professional goals.