FDI POLICY STATEMENT

Basic Rights and Responsibilities of Dental Patients

Adopted by the FDI General Assembly:
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Serving individual patients and the public is a primary focus of modern dentistry. Thus, recognizing fundamental human rights and patients' rights - both individually and collectively - is one of the core values and commitments of the dental profession. Upholding these basic rights is a vital component to the provision of quality and ethical oral health care.

The many basic rights of dental patients include:

- to receive oral health care in a healthy and safe environment, and with compassion and respect for their rights and dignity;
- access to competent, high-quality, fair and ethical oral health information and care;
- protection of their personal privacy;
- necessary concern for their needs, best interests, reasonable preferences, and complaints; and
- encouragement to participate in decision-making processes affecting their oral health care.

Such basic patients' rights must be balanced by their responsibilities to help safe, quality, efficient and ethical oral care to be provided for all members of society, and to acknowledge their responsibility for safeguarding their own oral health. These responsibilities arise their general ethical obligations and public responsibilities and include their obligation to:

- show respect for the well-being and needs of others;
- understand that dentists desire to be reasonably effective and equitable in providing appropriate care to all members of the community;
- give the necessary priority to oral health and accept their responsibility for their own oral health;
- acknowledge the reality and limits of individual oral health care;
- understand the variance in how oral health care can be legitimately delivered; and
- know their rights as patients and the limitations of these rights.

The legal limitations or exceptions to basic patients' rights (e.g. where there is a risk of public health hazards) and also the circumstances where patients may experience

significant barriers in meeting their responsibilities (e.g. physical or mental challenges) need to be acknowledged.

The constant change affecting both the dental profession and the public necessitates regular evaluation of the rights and responsibilities of dental patients to meet these challenges in the future.

KEYWORDS

Ethics, legislation

REFERENCES

Background documents that have particularly been developed by the Dental Practice Committee in conjunction with the draft FDI statement consist of five short articles (in English) published in the International Dental Journal.

- *Dentist-patient relationship and quality care 1. Introduction. International Dental Journal. 55(2):110-2, 2005.*
- *Dentist-patient relationship and quality care 2. Trust. International Dental Journal 55(3):168-170, 2005.*
- *Dentist-patient relationship and quality care 3. Communication. International Dental Journal. 55(4):254-256,2005.*
- *Dentist-patient relationship and quality care 4. Professional information and informed consent. International Dental Journal. 55(5):342-344,2005.*
- *Dentist-patient relationship and quality care 5. Modification of behaviour.International Dental Journal. 55(6):395-7,2005.*