3 October 2012

Your views are needed on changes in dentistry

The General Dental Council (GDC) is asking for as many views as possible on three major consultations which could change dental regulation in the United Kingdom.

All dentists, dental nurses, dental technicians, clinical dental technicians, dental hygienists, dental therapists and orthodontic therapists have to be registered with the GDC and meet its standards throughout their careers to work legally in the UK.

Direct access

The GDC is considering removing restrictions that prevent patients seeing any member of the dental team until after they’ve seen a dentist for a referral. (The only exception to this is with clinical dental technicians; they are already able to provide full dentures to patients who have no teeth without the need for a prescription).

This proposed change is called “direct access”. It would mean that registered dental care professionals would have the option to provide services to patients without the patient having to see a dentist first.

Earlier this year the Office of Fair Trading called for the changes to be made as soon as possible and the Department of Health has welcomed that call.

Now the GDC wants to hear from you.

You can have your say on the proposed changes here:  
http://www.gdc-uk.org/GDCcalendar/Consultations/Pages/Direct-Access-Consultation.aspx

Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics for dental professionals

At the same time the GDC wants to hear what people think about the new standards it has drafted that all registered dental professionals will have to follow.

These include:

- Making it clear to patients which treatments can be provided under the health service and those which can only be provided on a private basis;
- If providing treatment, also making sure that a simple list of costs is clearly visible in a reception or waiting area;
- Being sufficiently fluent in written and spoken English to communicate effectively with patients, their relatives, the dental team and other healthcare professionals in the UK.

Have your say here:  
CPD for assurance of continuing fitness to practise

The GDC already requires registered dental professionals to keep learning and developing throughout their professional lives – this is called Continuing Professional Development (CPD). It’s been a mandatory requirement since 2008 and is currently being reviewed.

The GDC is now proposing a range of changes to CPD requirements as a contribution to assuring the continuing fitness to practise of dental professionals. The public consultation proposals include:

- Developing learning outcomes for CPD linked to the GDC standards;
- Annual mandatory CPD declarations;
- Embedding personal development planning into the scheme;
- New minimum CPD hours requirement.

Alongside the CPD consultation we have also launched a questionnaire aimed at patients, organisations that represent patient interests and members of the public. The questionnaire seeks views on patient expectations of dental professionals and the place of patient feedback.

Have your say here: http://www.gdc-uk.org/Aboutus/Researchandconsultations/cpdreview/Pages/default.aspx

What happens next?

The responses to these consultations will be used to inform the GDC’s decisions on these issues. Sign up to the monthly newsletter to keep up to date with developments: www.gdc-uk.org

Ends

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