

Editorial



Dental education now and in the future

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The history of dental education is extensive, with rapid changes and variations occurring across different regions and countries. Nevertheless, several common themes can be identified.

Dentistry has consistently maintained a strong connection with technological advancements. Dental education has incorporated technology to enrich both teaching and learning experiences. This involves training students on the effective use of virtual reality simulations, digital imaging, 3D printing, and digital tools like intraoral scanners. These technologies offer students more interactive and immersive learning opportunities. Integrating these tools into the curriculum enhances diagnostic capabilities, treatment planning, and patient management.

Dental education is transitioning to a more patient-centered approach, emphasizing holistic care and taking into account the patient's overall well-being. We must prioritize patient-centered care, concentrating on the specific needs and preferences of each individual. Future dentists need to receive training that enables them to develop personalized treatment plans and offer compassionate care. This training should encompass enhanced communication skills, cultural competence, and ethical considerations pertinent to providing patient-centered care.

Dentistry is increasingly intertwined with other healthcare fields. As a result, collaboration among various health professions is growing in importance. Dental education should shift towards interprofessional education, in which dental students learn alongside their peers from other healthcare disciplines, such as medicine, nursing, and pharmacy. This collaborative approach fosters more comprehensive and coordinated patient care. Moreover, it encourages teamwork and enhances the understanding of each profession's role in patient care.

Evidence-based dental practice is increasingly emphasized in education. Students are taught to critically assess scientific research and integrate it into their clinical practice. By incorporating research literacy and critical thinking skills into the curriculum, students are empowered to make informed decisions grounded in the most reliable evidence available.

Dental education always highlights the significance of prevention and promotion of oral health. This encompasses teaching patients about appropriate oral hygiene practices, diet and nutrition, as well as lifestyle factors that influence both oral and general health. Dental professionals must possess the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively educate patients, ultimately aiming to decrease the prevalence of dental diseases.

Dental education should place a greater emphasis on ethical and professional conduct. It is essential for dental professionals to be well-versed in professional ethics, patient confidentiality, informed consent, and treatment management. By emphasizing these principles throughout dental education, we can ensure that future dentists uphold high ethical standards and deliver exceptional care to their patients.

Lifelong learning is crucial in every profession, as knowledge and skills are constantly evolving. Dental education must foster a culture of lifelong learning, motivating dentists to remain current with the latest research, advancements, and best practices throughout their careers. This can be accomplished through continuous professional development programs and integrated opportunities for self-directed learning.

These educational changes did not occur abruptly; rather, they are the result of sustained efforts and continue to evolve. Achieving successful outcomes, such as training dentists of the future, necessitates collaborative efforts from not only the education sector, but also the entire dental community.