



THE GENERAL DENTAL PRACTITIONER

VOLUME 39,40 & 41

MAY 2024

*Council of the college of
General Dental Practitioners
of Sri Lanka 2023/2024*

EDITORIAL

Embracing a New Era: The Evolution from General to Family Dental Practitioner

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In the ever-evolving landscape of dental care, a significant shift is underway – the transformation of the General Dental Practitioner into the Family Dental Practitioner. This change is more than a mere rebranding; it represents a profound expansion in the scope, skills, and ethos of dental professionals.

Family Dentistry: A Holistic Approach

At the heart of Family Dentistry lies a commitment to providing comprehensive oral health care within the broad context of family and community. This discipline transcends the barriers of race, culture, and social class, offering a unique blend of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that qualify practitioners to deliver initial contact and comprehensive dental care to all family members. Family dentists are adept at addressing a myriad of issues - physical, psychological, or social - irrespective of the patient's age, sex, or nature of the complaint.

The Role of the Family Dental Practitioner

As leaders in their field, Family Dental Practitioners bear the responsibility of ongoing, patient-centered care, coordinating health care through appropriate consultations and community resources. Their clinics are hubs of diverse dental teams, including Dental Surgery Nurse Assistants, Dental Laboratory Technicians, Receptionists, Dental Office Managers, and other staff. With National Vocational Training qualifications (NVQ Level 4) available for these roles, the importance of developing management and leadership skills in these practitioners cannot be overstated.

Community Integration and Patient-Centric Care

Ideally, a family dentist is an integral part of the community they serve, ensuring accessibility and availability. They view patients as individuals needing help, understanding the context of each illness. Every consultation is seen as an opportunity for disease prevention and health promotion, focusing on oral health.

Family dentists often extend their services beyond the clinic, attending to patients at home or in hospital settings.

Expanding Roles and Advanced Procedures

The scope of Family Dentistry is broadening to include complex, aesthetic, and cosmetic procedures. This includes crown and bridge work, oral implants, and even ventures into the realm of Dental Aesthetics with procedures like Botoxology, Labioplasty, Oral lifts, Peels, Pinnaplasty, Palpebral and Skin Rejuvenation, and total Facial Rejuvenation. To equip themselves for these advanced roles, Family Dentists are increasingly seeking out new courses and training opportunities.

A Vision for Integrated Health Service

The Family Dental Practitioner is ideally positioned to work within a health service framework that values quality, equity, relevance, and cost-effectiveness. The integration of diverse forms of care at the primary level has been shown to enhance health outcomes, underlining the pivotal role of the Family Dentist in contemporary health care.

As we embrace this new paradigm, the transition from General to Family Dental Practitioner is not just a change in title but a meaningful stride towards a more holistic, integrated, and patient-centered approach to dental care. It's a commitment to elevating the standard of oral health care, not just for individuals, but for entire communities.

Editor's Note

In light of the challenging circumstances affecting societal norms and daily life, the college council has taken a considered decision to consolidate Volumes 39, 40, and 41 into a single publication. This amalgamation in our Journal is a response to the external adversities that have disrupted regular academic and administrative operations. We believe this approach is the most effective way to maintain the continuity and quality of our scholarly communications during these unprecedented times. We appreciate the understanding and support of our readers and contributors in this matter.

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