

Abstract

This review of literature looks at the mental and physical health of dental hygienists (DHs), with an emphasis on the influence of the profession, musculoskeletal diseases (MSDs), and burnout prevalence. The analysis demonstrates that dental hygienists suffer from disturbingly high levels of stress and burnout in comparison to other medical professions. It also emphasises how widespread MSDs are as a result of the ergonomic difficulties that employees encounter at work. Furthermore, it shows how organisational characteristics affect workplace culture and patient safety, highlighting the importance of strong communication and leadership. In order to manage burnout and enhance wellness, it's important to look at preventive measures such ergonomic treatments and methods for developing mental health resilience. Importantly, it suggests a comprehensive strategy for enhancing dental hygienists' general well-being by incorporating the 'Wheel of well-being' framework into dental operations. Although the study offers valuable insights, more investigation is required to fully comprehend the underlying causes of MSDs and burnout, assess treatment efficacy, and examine organisational aspects that impact dental hygienists' well-being.

Introduction

The physical and mental well-being of dental hygienists (DHs) significantly impacts their job satisfaction and the quality of patient care they provide. DHs fulfil crucial roles in preventive oral health care, including teeth cleaning, oral disease examination, and patient education (Bercasio *et al.*, 2020). However, the demanding nature of their work and workplace dynamics present significant challenges to their overall well-being.

Musculoskeletal diseases (MSDs) are a primary concern for DHs due to the repetitive and physically demanding nature of their tasks. Conditions such as back pain, neck strain, and carpal tunnel syndrome not only cause physical discomfort but also hinder their ability to perform effectively, leading to long-term health issues (Hayes *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, DHs frequently experience burnout and stress due to heavy workloads, time constraints, and the emotional demands of patient care (BDJ Team, 2023).

The relationship between DH health and the work environment, including organisational culture and leadership dynamics, is crucial. Positive organisational cultures that prioritise employee well-being and foster supportive environments enhance job satisfaction and morale among DHs (Choi *et al.*, 2019).

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including implementing preventative measures to mitigate ergonomic risk factors, promoting mental health resilience techniques, and fostering positive organisational cultures (Plessas & Delgado, 2018).

The aim of the project is to assess available literature on physical, mental and psychosocial challenges of DHs and their potential preventative measures to improve their overall well-being.