

## Duties and obligation of dentists

### Duties and Obligation of Dental practitioners to their patients

#### 1. Responsibility to Patient:

##### a- Service

- ✓ Life, Health and Well-Being: It is the responsibility of the Dental surgeon to provide patients with the highest quality of care in a timely manner, acknowledging the constraints presented by the patient and the resources of the faculty.
- ✓ Appropriate and Pain-free Oral Function: It is the responsibility of the Dental surgeon to plan treatments that deal with the specific nature of dental health for each individual patient with regards to variables such as the patient's age, general health, underlying anatomy, and compliance with oral hygiene. This responsibility is dependent on the patient's cooperation, interest and commitment to the receipt of treatment.
- ✓ Patient Autonomy: The patient has the right to choose, on the basis of adequate information, from alternative treatment plans that meet professional standards of care. The treatment plan may or may not be the preference of the Dental surgeon or the supervising faculty. The Dental surgeon's role is to provide information in an effort to help the patient choose a treatment plan.
- ✓ Dignity: Dental surgeons should value and advocate the dignity and self-respect of patients. They should relate to all patients receiving care, as person's worthy of respect and endeavour in all their actions to preserve and demonstrate respect for each individual.
- ✓ Fairness: A Dental surgeon shall not exclude, as patients, members of society on the basis of discrimination with respect to factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, spiritual beliefs, social or marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, health status, lifestyle or the physical attributes of the patient.

✓ Accountability: Dental surgeons should conduct themselves with honesty and integrity. They should practice within their own level of competence. They should seek additional information or knowledge; seek the help, and/or supervision and help, of a peer or superior when aspects of the care required are beyond their level of competence.

#### **b- Competency**

Dental surgeons must keep knowledge current and strive for new knowledge.

#### **c- Treatment According to an Approved and Accepted Plan**

Provision of treatment as discussed and agreed upon by Dental surgeon and patient.

#### **d- Provision of Information**

A Dental surgeon is obligated to provide to patients an honest comment and opinion of their oral health.

#### **e- Proper Management of Records**

✓ A Dental surgeon must maintain accurate and comprehensive records of medical and dental histories, clinical findings, diagnoses, treatment plans, and treatments of each patient. Such records or reports of clinical information must be released to the patient, or to whomever the patient directs, when requested by the patient.

✓ When there is a transfer of patient care to another Dental surgeon, the original dental practitioner must ensure that a copy of the patient's record is readily available to the new practitioner.

✓ The Dental surgeon must not falsify written or electronic documents including patient records in any manner such as changing previous entries, making false entries, or forging signatures, with the intent to defraud, injure or deceive another.

✓ The Dental surgeon must not misuse written or electronic documents, including patient records, by unauthorized removal of such documents from their location of instruction or storage, or unauthorized use or dissemination of personal or private information in such documents.

## **2. Obligations to Patients:**

Though a Dental Surgeon is not bound to treat each and every person asking his services, he should attend emergencies reporting to the clinic and should be mindful of the high character of his/her mission and the responsibility he discharges in the course of his professional duties.

Dental Surgeon should see patients at their hour of appointment as far as possible unless he is unable to do so due to unforeseen delays. He should never forget that the health and the lives of those entrusted to his care depend on his skill and attention. A Dental Surgeon should endeavour to add to the comfort of the sick by making his visits at the hour indicated to the patients.

A Dental surgeon advising a patient to seek service of another Dental Surgeon or physician is acceptable.

However, in the case of medical emergency a Dental Surgeon must institute standard care including resuscitation in case of cardiac episodes, for which all dental surgeons must be adequately trained in basic life support.

A Dental Surgeon can refuse treatment using his discretion, but it should not be on the basis of any discrimination of colour, caste, religion, nationality or the presence of ailments such as HIV or other contagious diseases. However, in keeping with the dictum (لَوْلا لِمَفْلا) ( of medical care, the dental surgeon must 'continue to treat' if he/she has accepted the patient for treatment.

### **When the treatment can be terminated:**

Treatment can be terminated on the wishes of the patient or with the resolution of the complaint for which the patient sought treatment.

Treatment can also be terminated if the patient is in need of additional or expert care for which the Dental surgeon is not equipped to treat or if it falls outside the range of his expertise. In such instances, the patient should be referred to such specialists or higher centres where treatment is possible.

A Dental Practitioner having any incapacity detrimental to the patient or which can affect his performance vis-a-vis the patient is not permitted to practice his profession.

## **3. Confidentiality:**

Confidences concerning individual or domestic life entrusted by patients to a Dental Surgeon and defects in the disposition or character of patients observed during professionally attending to a patient should never be revealed unless:

1- Such a revelation is required by the laws of the State.

2- Clinician must determine whether his duty to society requires him to employ knowledge, obtained through confidence as a health care provider to protect a healthy person against a communicable disease to which he is about to be exposed. In such instance, the Dental Surgeon should act as he would wish another to act toward one of his own family in like circumstances.

#### **4. Prognosis:**

The Dental Surgeon should neither exaggerate nor minimize the gravity of a patient's disease. He should ensure himself that the patient, his relatives or his responsible friends have such knowledge of the patient's condition as will serve the best interests of the patient and the family.

#### **5. The Patient must not be neglected:**

A Dental surgeon is free to choose whom he will serve. He should, however, respond to any request for his assistance in an emergency. Once having undertaken a case, the Dental Surgeon should not neglect the patient, nor should he withdraw from the case without giving adequate notice to the patient and his family. He shall not willfully commit an act of negligence that may deprive his patient or patients from necessary Dental/Medical care.