

Essential support for



the dental team

Dental hygienists and dental therapists are now an indispensable part of any dental team. But how can individuals in these roles help ensure that the practices and teams they are part of prosper? By **Julie Deverick**¹

Lightening the load

It's no understatement to say that dentists often work under a lot of pressure. With growing patient lists, busy schedules and the fact that many of these professionals want to branch out and follow a specialist field of

biofilm disruption air flow therapy treatments and other measures which help reduce the strain on a dentist's work load. This means that dentists can instead focus their attentions on providing treatment such as dental implants and other complex surgeries.

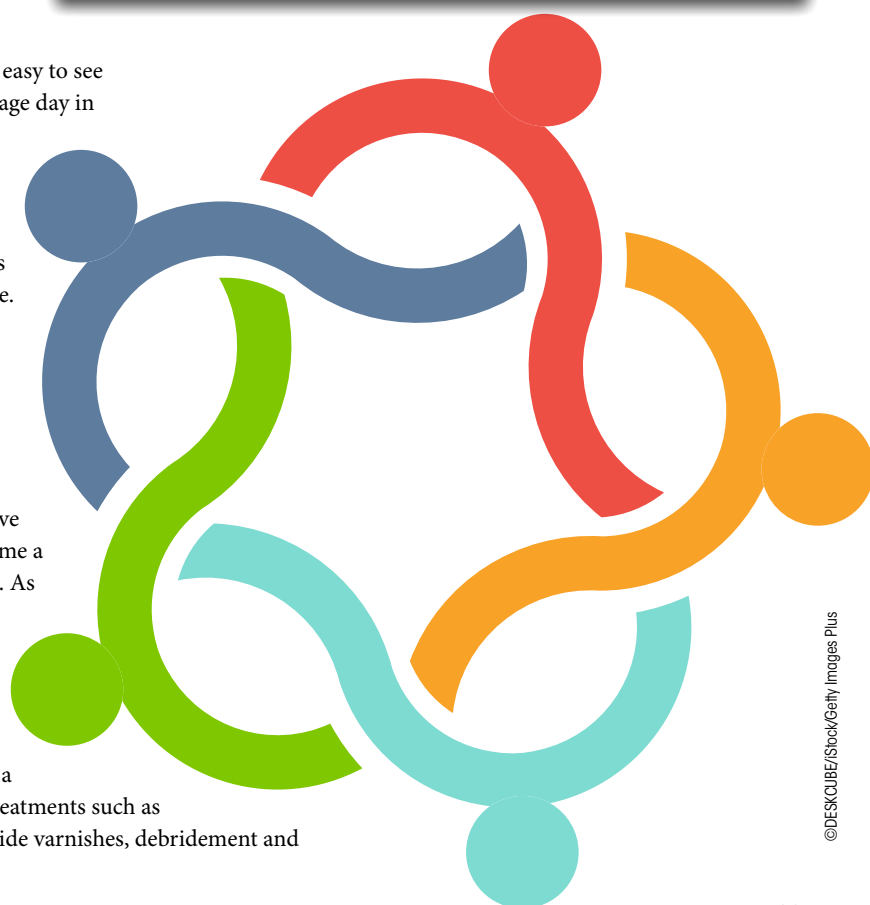
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dentistry, it's easy to see why the average day in practice can fast become a stressful situation where time is of the essence.

In light of this, it makes sense that dental hygienists and dental therapists have quickly become a vital support. As part of their roles, dental hygienists and dental therapists can perform a number of treatments such as fillings, fluoride varnishes, debridement and

Author information

¹Julie has over 30 years of experience as a dental hygienist, during which time she has also gained skills in teaching, management and administration which help her in her BSDHT role. Julie continues to work in practice so she understands some of the frustrations and limitations of the job which is why she is keen to continue supporting members of BSDHT by working with the Executive Committee and others, to break the barriers that confine dental hygienists and dental therapists in the workplace.



This skill mix not only helps from a time perspective, but can also encourage practice growth. Supporting dentists this way allows the practice to expand its range of treatments, bringing in new patients and helping the business to thrive, benefitting all.

A preventive approach

As the shift in attitude within the profession veers more towards prevention, dental hygienists and dental therapists have never been so important. As well as providing preventive measures, the educational aspects of these professional roles are exceptionally valuable. Patients now seek information

Additional value for all

Patients are routinely looking towards a more holistic experience when they visit the dentist. Tooth-whitening and other aesthetic-centric treatments are fast becoming a big draw.

Dental hygienists and dental therapists are therefore in a fortunate position. As they can perform these treatments following the proper training, they can add essential value to the practices they work for, bringing in a new segment of patients and expanding the available treatment offerings of the provider. These treatments are also wonderful for marketing purposes, and can bring in further capital by attracting a new demographic of

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from dental hygienists and dental therapists. Whether this involves teaching about effective brushing techniques, interdental cleaning and periodontal health or even discussing lifestyle/dietary routines and how these can affect dental health, these professionals are well placed to provide all the information that a patient could need.

So how does this support the rest of the dental team? The most positive aspect of people taking better care of their dental and periodontal health is that they will be less likely to need complex restorative work or more drastic treatments in the future. This also helps to lighten the load, leaving the rest of the team more time to concentrate on different challenges.

Furthermore, patients can now visit the dental hygienist or dental therapist directly in some cases. This is a really good way to streamline treatment for all, helping to create a better practice experience for patients as they can access the treatment and information without having to see multiple professionals, for shorter, more efficient treatment.

patients in many cases.

For example, in the lead up to Christmas or just before wedding season, treatments such as tooth whitening are high in demand. By advertising the availability of these services at the right times, a practice is likely to reap the rewards.

An additional advantage is the length of time for which patients visit the dental hygienist or dental therapist. Longer appointment times mean that it’s much easier for these individuals to provide guidance and build a better relationship with patients, helping to inspire loyalty so that these patients won’t seek treatment elsewhere.

Support from every angle

As you can see, dental hygienists and dental therapists are an incredibly important part of the dental team and offer support in a lot of different ways. However, it’s necessary for individuals in these roles to have support themselves so that they can continue to be such an asset.

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