

1996 Health Manpower Survey

Summary of the Characteristics of Ancillary Dental Personnel Enumerated

1. Dental Hygienists

1.1 Dental hygienists refer to the personnel who have enrolled with the Dental Council of Hong Kong as dental hygienists under the Ancillary Dental Workers (Dental Hygienists) Regulations (Chapter 156).

1.2 41 dental hygienists were enumerated in the 1996 Health Manpower Survey (HMS), representing an increase of 57.7% over the 1992 HMS (26).

1.3 Majority of the dental hygienists enumerated were females. Their overall mean age was 33.2. 43.9% of the dental hygienists enumerated worked in the private sector, followed by the universities/Prince Philip Dental Hospital (34.1%) and the government (22.0%).

2. Dental Therapists

2.1 Dental therapists refer to the personnel who have completed the requisite period of training and passed the Dental Therapist Certificate Examination or equivalent.

2.2 In the 1996 HMS, 244 dental therapists were enumerated, representing an increase of 29.8% over the 1992 HMS (188).

2.3 Among the 244 dental therapists enumerated, 92.2% were females, giving a sex ratio of 8 (males per 100 females). Their overall mean age was 32.0. They were all working in the government.

3. Dental Technicians/Technologists

3.1 Dental technicians/technologists refer to the personnel who have completed the requisite period of training and passed the examination for the Dental Technician's Certificate of the City and Guilds of London Institute; or have a Diploma in Dental Technology issued by the former Hong Kong Polytechnic or the Prince Philip Dental Hospital; or equivalent. Those dental technicians having at least 4 years' experience as dental mechanic apprentices are also included.

3.2 A total of 274 dental technicians/technologists were enumerated in the 1996 HMS, resembling that of the 1992 HMS (275).

3.3 The 274 dental technicians/technologists enumerated were mostly males as indicated by the overall sex ratio of 813 (males per 100 females). Their overall mean age was 40.3. The largest share of the dental technicians/technologists enumerated were found in the private sector (71.2%), followed by the government (11.3%) and other sectors (17.5%).

4. Dental Surgery Assistants

4.1 Dental surgery assistants refer to the personnel who assist the dental surgeons in the treatment of patients. The dental surgery assistants working in the public sector, including the government, universities, Prince Philip Dental Hospital and Hospital Authority institutions, have usually received formal on-the-job training or possessed professional qualifications. However, those working in the private sector, such as private dental surgeries and private hospitals, may not have formal on-the-job training in the profession.

4.2 The total number of dental surgery assistants (public sector) enumerated in the 1996 HMS was 361, which represented an increase of 24.5% over the 1992 HMS (290).

4.3 Of the 361 dental surgery assistants (public sector) enumerated, only 10 were males, giving a sex ratio of 3 (males per 100 females). Their overall mean age was 31.7. 60.1% of them were employed by the government, followed by the universities/Prince Philip Dental Hospital (38.2%) and the Hospital Authority (1.7%).

4.4 There were 852 dental surgery assistants (private sector) enumerated in the survey. 98.4% of them did not hold any relevant professional qualification. Among them, only 9 were males. Their overall mean age was 30.5.

5. Inter-sector Flow of Ancillary Dental Personnel Enumerated

5.1 Of the ancillary dental personnel enumerated in the 1996 HMS, 27, 203, 31, 261 and 265 personnel reported to be working locally as dental hygienists, dental therapists, student dental therapists, dental technicians/technologists and dental surgery assistants (public sector) respectively as at 1.7.1992. Most of them remained in the same sector as at 1.7.1996 except that 14.8% of the dental hygienists, 4.2% of the dental technicians/technologists and 5.7% of the dental surgery assistants (public sector) had undergone inter-sector flow between 1.7.1992 and 1.7.1996. On the other hand, all the 234 dental therapists, of whom 31 were in the student rank as at 1.7.1992, remained in the government during the period.

5.2 It was also found that 14 dental hygienists, 10 dental therapists, 13 dental technicians/technologists and 96 dental surgery assistants (public sector) were not working in the respective professions in local institutions as at 1.7.1992. At that time, they were studying for the present profession, working in the same profession abroad or working in other professions etc. Among them, 57.1% of the dental hygienists and 69.2% of the dental technicians/technologists joined the private sector after 1.7.1992 whilst all the dental therapists and 75.0% of the dental surgery assistants (public sector) were employed by the government.