

AN ASSESSMENT OF CLINICAL PRODUCTIVITY OF DENTAL INTERNS AT KING SAUD UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to assess the clinical productivity of dental interns at King Saud University's College of Dentistry (KSU-CD) in Riyadh (KSA) by setting a numerical target to drive clinical activity, monitor performance, and establish future trends. The clinical records of seventy interns of the Interns' Training Program at KSU-CD, were analyzed in this study over a six-month period. Great variations in productivity exist among dental interns. Female interns received more patients and spent less treatment time with them. Interns performed tooth extractions, pulpotomies, and restorations most frequently, whereas prosthodontics, periodontics and preventive dentistry were the least practiced. It can be concluded that performance and productivity of dental interns need to be revised in general, as they did not completely fulfill the listed objectives of interns' training program. Thus, corrective measures should be taken into consideration to improve the clinical performance, and treatment outcomes, based on preventive approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment of interns standard of care requires careful monitoring of their clinical performance and productivity. This is done as an integral part of dental education at King Saud University, College of Dentistry (KSU-CD), where the freshly graduate is required to undertake a twelve-month period as an intern before being fully registered as a licensed dentist. This Intern Training Program (ITP) integrates both qualitative and quantitative aspects and uses criterion-based assessment. Detailed analysis and real-time reporting mechanisms provide both students and staff with effective data to enhance the learning process.

The ITP expects the interns to participate in quarterly 3-month rotations. One rotation involves maxillofacial surgery training in one of the recognized hospitals while the remaining 3 rotations involve primary and comprehensive patient care. While comprehensive care sessions put emphasis on proper treatment planning and finishing cases, the scope of primary

care sessions is mainly to treat the chief complaint of walk-in patients. The latter includes extraction, simple restorations, endodontic treatment of single rooted teeth, immediate dentures, prostheses repair, and referral to specialists and undergraduate students.¹

Productivity is used to define the activity of a dental practitioner and the quality of care provided.² Productivity is a relative term and relies on many factors such as the working environment, incentives, type of education, gender, age, materials, number of assistants, and time consumption³. Indicators of clinical productivity must always be developed to evaluate current performance⁴ and records of productivity are essential to evaluate clinical outcome, identify shortcomings, and ultimately monitor trends.³

The aim of this study was to assess the clinical productivity of dental interns at KSU-CD. The null hypothesis was that all interns comply with the requirements and that there are no differences based on gender. The level of significance was set at $\alpha=0.05$.

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