// MANDATE

CED WORKING GROUP PATIENT SAFETY, INFECTION CONTROL AND ~~WASTE MANAGEMENT~~SUSTAINABILITY

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The dental profession seeks to promote quality and safety in many ways, including developing systems for preventing adverse events or near misses. Much of this is implemented already in Member States, although action to improve patient safety is an ongoing preoccupation.

Patient safety can be ensured by a well-educated professional, communicating well with patients and other health professionals and working with the appropriate equipment in a safe environment with adequate infection control and waste management systems.

Infection control and waste management procedures are important and essential elements of dental care. The guidelines for infection control and waste management are not constant – they develop and change according to evidence-based findings.

The dentist, as the only fully qualified team-member, has an overall responsibility for the dental team and is responsible for the professional activities of less-qualified team members. The supervision of the dental team by a dentist is essential. The dentist is obliged to apply recent research information on infection control and waste management and a wide range of hygienic procedures as part of continuous professional development.

Infection control and waste management and a wide range of hygienic procedures are extremely important for patient safety and the safety of the dental team as well. They must be provided effectively in terms of the costs involved. It is necessary to respect and accept national regulations at the level of EU Member-States.

While we are aware that dentists are responsible for infection control and waste management, hygienic practice guidelines also are under the influence of commercial interests of providers and producers of the dental industry.

European dentists, taking into account the needs arising from increasing mobility of patients and healthcare providers have to fulfil minimum requirements of safety, infection control and waste management and comply with the existing national regulation at the level of the EU Member States, in order to achieve the best possible safety of the individuals involved and the protection of the environment.

Objectives of the Working Group

1. Monitor EU legislation related to patient safety, dental personnel safety, infection control and waste management;
2. Increase contacts and build long-term relationship with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) interested in patient safety, with the intention of influencing any future legislative initiatives focusing on patient safety;
3. Monitor the impact of new European legislation related to EU water policy, notably the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive. Additionally, the implementation of the European Green Deal, in particular the new circular economy action plan (CEAP) and the Climate Law, should be monitored.
4. Encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, use of materials and infrastructure in the dental office/clinic;
5. Monitor the protocols related to the protection and adoption of relevant standards dealing with ionizing and non-ionising radiation;
6. Provide information and raise awareness among CED Members on infection control and waste management, satisfying the needs arising from the increasing mobility of healthcare professionals;
7. Liaise with other CED Working Groups, such as WG Dental Materials and Medical Devices;
8. Prepare statements targeting at the improvement of the patient's confidence in the appropriate infection control protocols, materials, devices and procedures, as well as recommendations in relation to patient safety practices (e.g. use of athletic mouthguards);
9. Increase the European Commission's confidence in both the scientific and professional competences of safe dental healthcare services;
10. Liaise with other European organisations on patient safety and infection control, in particular with the ECDC;
11. Monitor the progress and updating of the ECDC webpage regarding the existing national guidance on infection control in dentistry;
12. Establish relationships and exchange information with European environmental agencies, and to
13. Monitor developments and raise awareness of the impact of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, RSV and other airborne diseases on dentistry;
14. Contribute to the increase of knowledge and practice regarding the improvement and maintenance of indoor air quality in the dental installations.