FDI POLICY STATEMENT

Ethical Recruitment of Dental Volunteers

Revised version adopted by the General Assembly:
September 2021, Sydney, Australia

Original version adopted by the FDI General Assembly:
October 1998, Barcelona, Spain

CONTEXT

FDI recognizes the important contribution of volunteers to socio-economic, medical, dental and intellectual developments worldwide. Their engagement in addressing disparities in health status, economic status and in bridging gaps between different populations and countries are highly valued and encouraged wherever possible.

SCOPE

This FDI Policy Statement covers the principles of ethical conduct for volunteer dentists and organizations employing volunteers who are urged to adapt them to their respective context and to promote them among other volunteers and organizations[1].

DEFINITION

Dental volunteer: A qualified and registered/licensed dentist who provides time and work free of charge.

PRINCIPLES

To ensure that any volunteer dentist's activity related to oral health should be to evaluate and improve the oral health status of the population served within available means and to promote the availability of oral healthcare on a continuing basis through sustained activities.

POLICY

FDI calls upon all stakeholders to uphold the following:

- Encourage volunteers to work in an established programme or project, i.e.one that is integrated into the host community and recognized by national governments, the national dental association or other health professional organizations.
- To provide appropriate professional indemnity for volunteers and insurance against public liability, personal loss or injury.
- Proper planning, reporting and evaluation are essential for the success of a project and need to be respected.

- When establishing a new project, support and guidance by experienced colleagues or experts, preferably from the local region, should be obtained.
- Volunteer programmes should ensure appropriate follow-up arrangements are in place for any patients to receive dental treatment subsequent to emergency care and service provision. Follow-up arrangements are important aspects of volunteer activities and unrealistic expectations should not be encouraged.
- Volunteer programmes should ensure their long-term impact and sustainability, e.g. through training local personnel and the introduction of preventive measures.

Volunteer dentists are called upon:

- to be aware of the Code of Ethics for the Dental Profession[2] and to apply it in every situation and every setting;
- to be ambassadors of goodwill and to represent the dental profession as a whole;
- to display professional behaviour and maintain ethical conduct;
- never to act alone, outside a known or established programme of care, or fail to notify the appropriate authorities;
- to comply with the legal requirements for the practice of dentistry in the selected jurisdiction including the holding of required qualifications;
- to consult with the local professional body or public health service prior to introducing new materials and equipment, as these may not be useful in a particular context, may not meet local or national standards, and may not be possible to maintain;
- to respect the regulations and culture of the host community;
- to refer for advice/treatment when any patients present requiring a level of competence beyond that held or in need of treatment beyond the possibilities of the volunteer service.

KEYWORDS

International recruitment, ethical recruitment, dental volunteers

DISCLAIMER

The information in this Policy Statement was based on the best scientific evidence available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and socio-economic constraints.

REFERENCES

1. FDI World Dental Federation. Role of FDI in Dental Ethics. Available from: https://www.fdiworlddental.org/role-fdi-dental-ethics [Accessed 26 July 2021].
2. Brands W, Naidoo S, Porter S, Sereny M, van Dijk W, Welie J. FDI Dental Ethics Manual 2. London: Quintessence Publishing; 2018. Available from:

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