

**PATIENT AWARENESS ON DENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED BY DENTAL
TECHNOLOGISTS IN UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DENTAL HOSPITAL**

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ABSTRACT

Dental health services are delivered in a range of settings, with input from a wide range of potential dental team members: dentists, hygienists and therapists, dental nurses, receptionist/managers and dental technologists. Patient awareness of the roles of various members of the dental team has not been conducted in the Kenyan setting. Dental technologists are a cadre of health workers in dentistry with training and clinical preparation in fabrication of dental prosthesis. This cadre of workers forms the majority of health workers providing dental health care services in Kenya. The main role of a dental technologist like other health workers is the preservation and restoration of health.

The objective of the study was to determine level of patient awareness of dental services provided by dental technologists among patients attending University of Nairobi Dental Hospital conducted as a cross-sectional descriptive study of the level of patient awareness of dental health services within their locality. The study area was the University Dental Hospital, Nairobi.

The study was carried out among adult patients aged 18 years and above. Based on Fishers formula for calculating sample size for a single proportion ninety six ($n = 96$) participants were recruited in the study. Systematic random sampling method was used in selecting study participants from the study population. Participants were interviewed using a structured questionnaire administered once they provided informed consent for inclusion in the study.

The mean age of the patients was 34.1 years ($SD = 11.9$). Females accounted for 58.3% of the participating patients and males represented 41.7% of patients giving a Male-to-female ratio of 1:1.4. Of the 96 patients interviewed, 79 (82.3%) reported that they had ever had a dental procedure done, 56 (58.3%) indicated that they had ever had a dental procedure performed that required laboratory work. There were 38 (39.6%) responses that correctly reflected the definition of a dental technologist and 23 (24%) patients were aware of the roles of dental technologists in dental healthcare. correct identification of the roles of dental technologist showed an association in patients who had undergone a clinical procedure involving lab work and undergoing other dental procedures.