

time or place - and all too often occur just at the wrong moment. In that situation a clinician working alone is faced with an impossible dilemma - do you provide emergency CPR or do you call for help? You certainly will not be in a position to do both, particularly if the surgery is some way from the reception area, as is often the case for Dental Hygienists and Therapists. One can imagine how critical a coroner might be of the practice and in particular the DCP who was working alone if the patient died in those situations.

It is for this reason that the GDC guidance, 'Principles of Dental Team Working' makes it clear that clinicians should only work alone in exceptional circumstances. When treating patients there should be somebody else present, preferably a registered team member who is trained to deal with medical emergencies.'

Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be made from this investigation. It would appear there is a higher probability of working with nursing support if you are a Dental Hygienist or Dental Hygienist-Therapist working within the North West when compared to other regions of the UK. It could also be concluded that as a direct effect of the working environment, Dental Hygienists and Dental Hygienist-Therapists are suffering increased risk from musculoskeletal problems along with higher levels of stress. Further to these conclusions the professional bodies associated with the profession evidently lean very much toward supporting the presence of a registered, trained and competent Dental Nurse being present to ensure best practice and to act in the patients' best interests in the event of a medical emergency occurring. With the evidence presented in this way the final conclusion that can be drawn would be that there is a need for the nursing support issue for Dental Hygienists and Dental Hygienist-Therapists to be resolved. However, with the introduction of the Quality Care Commission (CQC) it could be suggested that further research into this area is needed in the forthcoming year. Possible areas of interest would be to gain insight into the patient perspective on nursing support and also look more in-depth at the increased risk of burnout and stress experienced by Dental Hygienists and Dental Hygienist-Therapists working

without dental nurse support.

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