

Role of FDI in Dental Ethics

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Preamble

FDI recognizes that dentistry is evolving and increasing in complexity due to:

- The globalization of the profession and the dental practice environment, as a result of the expanding role of oral healthcare providers in general health, crossborder mobility of oral healthcare providers, migration of patients, and new opportunities for dental tourism,
- The increasing role of industry, shareholders and other third parties in shaping dental practice and research and a trend towards large group practices and dentists entering into enterprise practice arrangements.
- Changes in the dentist/patient relationship, including greater emphasis on patient self-determination, the necessity of intra- and inter-professional care giving, and an expanding scope of the practice of dentistry.
- Greater access of information for patients, an increased interest in aesthetics.
- Persistent problems in achieving universal access to oral healthcare.

These, and other such developments, are generating new ethical challenges, and the need for ethical awareness, reflection and guidance is paramount.

Justification

In its Constitution, FDI acknowledges its responsibility towards the promotion of ethics in dentistry, listing as one of its four missions “to advance and promote the ethics, art, science and practice of dentistry” to guarantee patients a beneficial relationship with the dental team, and optimal oral health. Consistent with this mission, FDI has issued various documents on ethically relevant topics such as the practice of dentistry, dental publications, access to care, patients' rights, and responsibilities of dentists.

However, at present there is no overarching policy statement on the role of FDI in the area of dental ethics. Therefore, this policy statement provides specific recommendations for the implementation of this mission in matters of ethics.

Statement

FDI will:

1. Advocate for the recognition and importance of dental ethics worldwide.
2. Encourage and enable education and research in dental ethics.
3. Network and consult in the field of dental ethics with national as well as international organizations and stakeholders. Promote relations between organizations that regulate the dental profession at national level with national and international organizations in the field of Dental Ethics.
4. Initiate and conduct ethics-related activities at FDI Meetings and Congresses.

5. Maintain a comprehensive, dynamic code of ethics on the practice of dentistry*.
6. Develop a policy statement on the ethics of dental (clinical) research.
7. Establish within the FDI Dental Practice Committee an expert group on all matters related to dental ethics.

* *The code of ethics would replace/combine selected ethics related FDI policy statements*

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11. FDI World Dental Federation. Constitution. Ferney-Voltaire: FDI World Dental Federation, 2012. Online at: <http://www.fdiworlddental.org/about-fdi/governance/constitution>
12. All FDI policy statements can be found online at: <http://www.fdiworlddental.org/resources/policy-statements-and-resolutions/>.