



MAY 2013

// CED RESOLUTION

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF DENTISTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



// INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the Council of European Dentists (CED), which represents over 340,000 dentists across Europe, is to promote high standards in dentistry and oral healthcare for European citizens.

Directive 2005/36/EC lays down minimum training requirements which shall equip the graduating dentist with the necessary competences to start practicing dentistry. This should, however, only represent the first stage of an individual's career. From graduation, professionals should undertake continuing professional development (CPD) throughout their career. The acquired experience, knowledge and skills will enable every dentist to practice dentistry safely, managing traditional as well as new challenges in oral health.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is defined as a continuing structured learning process of dental practitioners, aimed to maintain, update or enhance knowledge, technical skills or professional clinical or behavioural standards, all of which can improve the provision of oral healthcare to the public.

Engaging in CPD is a professional obligation of every European dentist, in order to be in line with the dental code of ethics of the CED. "[...] *must assure the quality of patient care by updating his or her professional knowledge and skills throughout his or her entire professional life*" (CED Code of ethics for dentists in the European Union, adopted during the CED General Meeting on 30 November 2007).

Due to different health systems delivering oral healthcare across the European Union, CPD is organised very differently in each Member State and can be obtained in different settings by different providers. The diversity of the continuing education activities on offer and the principle of free choice for practitioners should be maintained in line with the policy of each Member State.

Therefore, the scope of this document is not to standardize or harmonize the CPD process within Europe but rather to provide some general principles that can be used as a tool for dentists and CPD providers as a basis and a model for their own programme development.

// OBJECTIVES OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Continuing professional development of dentists must contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the dental practitioner's oral health knowledge and skills with the objective to assure and continually improve the delivery of high quality treatment to patients. Regular continuing education is thus of high importance for the dental quality assurance and for patient safety.

Continuing professional development of dentists should:

- meet the individual requirements of the practitioner, fulfil the personal demands for continuing education and deepen dental knowledge, skills and competences;
- take into consideration the needs for continuing development with regard to the development of dentistry and epidemiology of oral health needs;
- maintain and develop modern quality-orientated and evidence-based oral healthcare for patients.

// PROVIDERS AND MODE OF DELIVERING CPD

CPD is training acquired after graduation and the national dental association of each country should have a prominent role in organizing CPD in collaboration with academic institutions, health authorities and health educators.

As CPD should address emerging health needs and be relevant to the health priorities of the country, the CED believes that all Member States should continue to have their own specific rules for CPD,

based on the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity (CED Resolution on the Review of Directive 2005/36/EC, adopted during the CED General Meeting in May 2011).

Any conflicting interests of CPD providers should be declared and any scientific basis of the activity presented should not be distorted by commercial considerations. Embedded advertising and direct commercial links are inappropriate within the educational content and should be avoided. The lecturers must disclose to participants any monetary or other special interest they may have with any company whose products are discussed in the course. Disclosure must be made in promotional material and in the presentation itself.

// TYPE AND CONTENT OF CPD ACTIVITIES

The type of CPD activities through which dentists can improve and broaden their knowledge, skills and competences are many and various, for instance such as courses and lectures, distance learning, conferences and workshops, as well as self-directed activities like writing journal articles and book reviews, preparing and presenting lectures and courses etc.

Each dental practitioner chooses CPD activities on the basis of their content, **clinical/scientific or other professional activities** and his or her personal development plan which is formulated according to the dentist's professional needs and interests.

Clinical or scientific activities are those related to the scientific, clinical or technical aspects of oral healthcare, or particular dental procedures such as: prevention, caries treatment, endodontic, oral cancer improving early detection etc., or activities related to infection control, medical emergencies, radiography, radiation protection and which contribute to patient safety.

Other professional activities are those that are indirectly related to dental practice/care. These include courses about practice management, legal and ethical issues.

// METHODS FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is the responsibility of the individual dentist to choose the topics and methods to improve and extend his or her knowledge and competences. As there are so many different methods of teaching and learning, it is necessary to offer different types of continuing education. Appropriate structures and methods for continuing development are, for example:

- a) Structures of continuing education (e.g. congresses, symposia, meetings, workshops, classes, colloquia, demonstrations, practical exercises);
- b) Clinical continuing education (e.g. rounds (home and ward rounds), training and work in dental practices, presentation and discussion of specific cases);
- c) Continuing education together with colleagues, such as quality circles or study groups (task forces) and peer review;
- d) Specific curricula (e.g. a structured continuous professional development, additional courses of education);
- e) Continuing professional self-development via different media (e.g. professional and technical press and literature, audio-visual educational means).

// QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

Continuing professional development of dentists is an important instrument of quality improvement and promotion, and, therefore, a regular individual evaluation is absolutely necessary. This is possible if the actors such as national dental associations and other providers support the quality assurance of dental education by formulating guidelines and recommendations and by strengthening the self-evaluation of organisers of continuing education and of their participants. The key criteria underlying the qualitative evaluation of any continuing professional development course should be:

a) Educational objectives

The educational objectives must express what is intended for participants to learn through the educational program proposed.

b) Organization and logistics of the activity

This refers to the human and material resources necessary to carry out the educational program, and the internal coherence of the program itself and its characteristics.

c) Relevance

Relevance refers to the appropriateness of the educational activity to meet the training needs of the group to which the activity is directed. Such training needs have to be identified through a valid and reliable system in a particular group to which the educational activity will be directed.

d) Teaching methodology

This refers to the didactic resources used in the educational activity in order to enhance the teaching/learning, taking into account the objectives, the content and the number of students to whom the activity is directed.

// EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

Participants should be given an opportunity to evaluate all CPD activities, to provide feedback to the CPD providers and instructors. Questionnaires for this purpose should allow participants to rate the learning outcomes of the CPD event with regard to ***achievement of the educational objectives, content coverage and extent of knowledge imparted, usefulness and relevance of the information provided, skills of the presenter, suitability of the venue.***

Participants should also be able to give any further comments on the event and provide suggestions for future CPD activities. The collected data need to be efficiently processed for planning new CPD programmes by the CPD provider.

// QUANTIFICATION OF CPD

As a matter of professional obligation and ethics every dentist should collect a minimum amount of CPD credits during a defined period based on the educational activities attended. A CPD credit must be based on the content and duration of the educational activities.

Dental practitioners are responsible for developing their personal educational plan according to their needs, collecting the required CPD credits and providing evidence and documentation of participation in the different learning activities.

Unanimously adopted by the CED General Meeting on 24 May 2013