

Policy Statement 6.23 – Prescribing and Dispensing Medications in Dentistry

Position Summary

Dentists must be able to prescribe, dispense, supply or administer any appropriate drugs for patients for the purposes of dental treatment.

1. Background

- 1.1. Dentists have had independent prescribing privileges for many years. While prescribing is only a minor part of most dental practices compared with most medical practices, dentists prescribe those medications needed for dental practice e.g. analgesics, antibiotics and anxiolytic medications.
- 1.2. To ensure dentists are able to prescribe safely on graduation, the current university training programs for student dentists include appropriate biomedical sciences to support safe prescribing.
- 1.3. Governments regulate the prescribing of medications and the regulations in each state and territory can vary significantly.
- 1.4. Medication safety is an important professional standard recognised by several government instrumentalities.
- 1.5. Safe and competent prescribing requires dentists to know when and when not to prescribe. It depends on a sound knowledge of the pharmacology of medications including their interactions with other medications.
- 1.6. Inappropriate prescribing can lead to ineffective or unsafe treatment, can prolong or exacerbate illness, can distress or harm the patient and can be costly. Liaison with other treating health providers is a valuable strategy to minimise risk.
- 1.7. The principles and current recommendations about the use of medications in dentistry are published in Therapeutic Guidelines, Oral and Dental.¹
- 1.8. Safe patient handover practices are critical to medication safety.
- 1.9. There are regulatory barriers to dentists participating in monitoring systems that support safe prescribing drugs of dependence.
- 1.10. ePrescriptions are a component of the Australian Government eHealth initiatives.

Definitions

- 1.11. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.12. DENTAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Board to provide dental care.
- 1.13. DENTIST is an appropriately qualified dental practitioner, registered by the Board to practise all areas of dentistry.

2. Position

- 2.1. Dentists must comply with all legal requirements pertaining to prescribing or dispensing medications.
- 2.2. The training of dentists must continue to meet the standards of the NPS Prescribing Competency Framework.
- 2.3. Dentists must be able to prescribe, supply or administer any appropriate drug for dental patients for the

¹ Oral and dental expert group. Therapeutic Guidelines: Oral and Dental. Version 3..

¹ This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statement: 6.17 Sedation in Dentistry.

purposes of dental treatment (including drugs of addiction).

- 2.4. Dentists should have full access to any real time prescription monitoring system.
- 2.5. Dentists should be able to generate prescriptions via a computer and participate in ePrescribing.
- 2.6. The scope of practice and training of allied dental personnel does not and should not include prescribing or dispensing of medications.
- 2.7. There should be uniform medications and poisons legislation in Australia.

Policy Statement 6.23

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