

Utilization of Oral Hygiene Expanded Functions among Oral Hygienists in Public Health Services in South Africa

V. Lukhozi¹, M. E. Hoque² and H. Heever¹

¹Department of Public Health, School of Health Care Sciences, University of Limpopo (Medunsa Campus), South Africa

²Graduate School of Business and Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus), South Africa

KEYWORDS Extra Functions. Implementation. Barriers. Oral Health Service. Improvement

ABSTRACT The purpose of this cross-sectional study was to determine the utilization of oral hygiene expanded functions among all 20 oral hygienists who completed a self-administered questionnaire. More than a tenth (11%) of the oral hygienists were not employing the oral hygiene expanded functions. The administration of local anesthesia was the most practiced expanded function (70%). One-fifth (20%) of the public health facility never use oral health expanded functions and 30% mentioned that lack of equipment was the reason for the functions not being fully utilized at their work place. The majority of oral hygienists (85%) agreed that the oral hygiene expanded functions are important and valuable to the oral health profession. Almost half (45%) of the hygienist indicated that their own preferences and lack of confidence were the barriers to utilization of the extended functions. It was recognized that barriers and problems experienced by oral hygienists towards full implementation of the oral hygiene expanded functions needed to be addressed.