DOMAIN I: PROFESSIONALISM

Definition

Professionalism is a commitment to a set of values, behaviours and relationships, which underpin the trust that the public hold in Dental Care Professionals.

Description

Professionalism must therefore permeate all aspects of good dental practice. It is a complex, multi-dimensional construct which has individual, interpersonal and societal dimensions. These are context dependent and encompass the competences; Ethics, Regulation and Professional Behaviour. Knowledge of the ethical, legal/regulatory and professional basis of dentistry is as essential to clinical practice as an understanding of the basic medical sciences and the development of clinical skills. The undergraduate curriculum should reflect this and integrate student learning about professionalism throughout the curriculum to facilitate the development of high standards of professional practice.

Dentists must make the care of patients their primary concern. They must be reflective, clinically competent and keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date by engaging in continuing professional development. They must establish and maintain good relationships with patients and colleagues, communicate effectively, and treat each person as an individual. They should work in partnership with patients, respecting patient choice and each patient's right to privacy and dignity. It is expected that dentists are committed to high personal and professional standards; they must be responsible, accountable and act within the law. They must seek to protect and improve the oral health of their community and work to maintain the trust the public has in the profession, by raising concerns where necessary.

KEY CONCEPTS:

Accountability 1.1.5, 1.1.7, 1.2.3, 1.3.8, 1.3.9

Behaviour 1.3.1, 1.3.8

Candour 1.1.7

Ethics 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3

Patient autonomy 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.2.2, 1.3.7

Patient Welfare 1.1.7, 1.3.2, 1.3.4

Regulation 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.2.5

Respect 1.1.4

Self-awareness 1.1.7, 1.3.5, 1.3.6

Social justice 1.1.8, 1.2.4, 1.3.3

MAJOR COMPETENCE: 1.1 ETHICS

Ethics provides the foundation for professionalism. The graduate dentist must understand the ethical principles of healthcare and be competent to apply them in every aspect of dentistry. In common with other branches of healthcare, the core ethical principles are (Brennan *et al* 2002):

i)   the primacy of patient welfare
ii)   respect for patient autonomy
iii)   commitment to social justice

Learning outcomes:

On graduation a dentist must be able to:

1.1.1   Apply core ethical principles to patient care
1.1.2   Differentiate between ethical or unethical situations and act on them appropriately
1.1.3   Apply ethical principles to the business aspects of dentistry
1.1.4   Demonstrate dignity and respect for others, without prejudice in respect of protected characteristics and social perceptions such as age, culture, diversity of background and opportunity, disability, gender, language, religion, and sexual orientation
1.1.5   Demonstrate respect for patient confidentiality at all times, including situations outside the healthcare setting
1.1.6   Demonstrate respect for patient autonomy, patient choices and informed consent
1.1.7   Act without delay if they, or a colleague, or the environment in which they are providing care, is putting someone at risk
1.1.8   Demonstrate digital professionalism through appropriate use of social media and digital communication, mindful of how these activities may bring themselves into ethically challenging situations and/or damage the reputation of the wider profession (bring it into disrepute).

MAJOR COMPETENCE: 1.2 REGULATION

The graduate dentist must have comprehensive knowledge of, and the skills to comply with, the regulatory system of the country in which they trained; legislation and codes of practice applicable to all aspects of the practice of dentistry. This is particularly important for those dentists who practise in countries other than their country of qualification as the regulatory systems vary considerably across Europe.

Learning Outcomes:

On graduation a dentist must be able to:

1.2.1   Describe the regulation of the practice of dentistry, the local legal framework (of the country or organisation) and the various codes of practice related to dentistry, including the requirement to be registered with an appropriate regulatory body
1.2.2   Apply the law and guidelines relating to consent, particularly with regard to children and adults unable to consent for themselves
1.2.3   Describe, and ensure adherence to, the scope of practice of all members of the dental team

1.2.4   Adhere to the code or accepted standards of practice on advertising in all media

1.2.5   Discuss the implications of, and be able to comply with, general legislation or regulation in areas such as health and safety legislation, infection prevention and control procedures, data protection and the use of ionising radiation

MAJOR COMPETENCE: 1.3 PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Professional behaviour can be understood as the manner in which one reflects on and reconciles different aspects of professional practice, demonstrating acceptance of professional responsibility and accountability. It is an overarching competence which must permeate all aspects of good dental practice and is manifested in the manner in which high quality oral healthcare is provided.

Learning outcomes:

On graduation a dentist must be able to:

1.3.1   Communicate effectively with patients (including parents and carers), colleagues in the dental team, other healthcare professionals, stakeholders and the public in general

1.3.2   Demonstrate a holistic approach to the provision of high quality patient care at all times

1.3.3   Respect social concepts of healthcare, being conscious that it is a privilege to be entrusted with the healthcare of members of society and that with this privilege come responsibilities

1.3.4   Demonstrate patient-centred care, ensuring that patients' interests come first and acting to protect them at all times

1.3.5   Describe the role of self-awareness, including an understanding of one's own limitations

1.3.6   Demonstrate conceptual reasoning skills to think through problems and know when to take advice.

1.3.7   Select and prioritise treatment options that are sensitive to each patient's individual needs, goals and values, compatible with contemporary therapy and congruent with human rights, a comprehensive oral health care philosophy and healthcare economics

1.3.8   Demonstrate skills in reflection on their own decisions, actions and performance and be able to apply this to learning and continuing professional development

1.3.9   Demonstrate accountability and the need to explain their actions and decisions with openness and transparency, having knowledge of the procedures involved in audit, clinical governance and peer review

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