



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

2015 JOB MARKET & EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) retained Framework Partners Inc. to undertake a survey of its members across Canada. Run principally in October 2015, with analysis and reporting completed in early 2016, this survey gathered data to gauge employment and job market trends for dental hygienists across the country.

Response to the survey was very strong. Framework Partners received 5,500 completed questionnaires through its secure website, representing just over one third of CDHA members (excluding students). This response rate was slightly higher than that in 2013. While the survey was promoted via email

to CDHA members, respondents also had the option to print and submit their questionnaire via fax and mail. CDHA collaborated with provincial dental hygiene associations to develop, test, and promote the survey questionnaire.

Pay and Employment Rates

The change in hourly rate from 2011 to 2015 represents a 1.43% annual compound increase, which is above the national rate of inflation reported by the Bank of Canada for the same period at 1.3%.



△ Average hourly rates: 2011-2015

Pay

- Respondents with less than one year of experience earn \$35.35 per hour on average; those with more than 20 years of experience earn \$44.01 or more per hour on average.
- 16% of respondents report an increase in their annual salary or hourly pay rate, compared to only 6% of respondents who report a decline over the last two years.
- The average hourly rate for second (\$41.48) and third jobs (\$44.09) is higher than the average for first job setting.
- 78% of respondents are hourly rate employees, similar to results in 2013 (77%) and 2011 (73%).
- 46% of respondents are satisfied with their salary.

Hours of work

- 50% of respondents work more than 30 hours per week, which is unchanged from 2013, while 50% work less than 30 hours per week.
- 73% of respondents report that the average number of hours they work has stayed the same or increased. This is a decrease from 2013 when 78% of respondents reported their work hours had stayed the same or increased.
- 65% of dental hygienists are working as many hours as they would like, which is unchanged from 2013 and 2011.

Employment rate

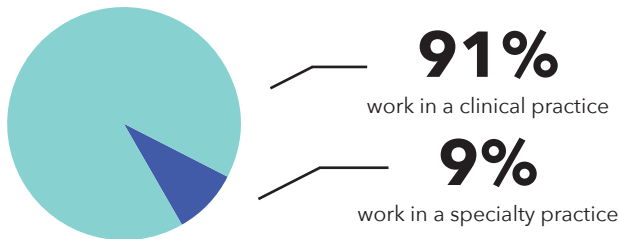
- The unemployment rate among respondents is 2.1%, approximately one-third of the current Canadian unemployment rate (7.1% as of December 2015).



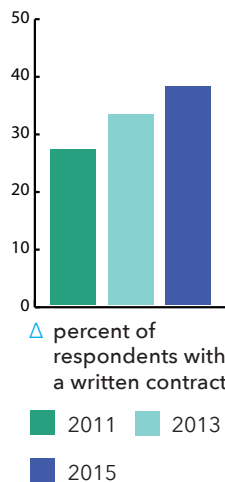
Workplace & Environment

Workplace

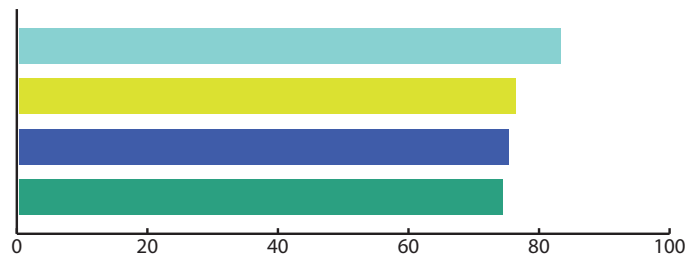
- 74% of respondents work for a single employer, consistent with 2013 and 2011 results.
- In terms of their primary workplace, respondents report the following:
 - 91% work in a clinical practice within a dental office, and 85% of this group work in general practice.
 - 9% work in a specialty practice, with the majority of these respondents stating that they work in orthodontic (33%) and periodontic (32%) practices.



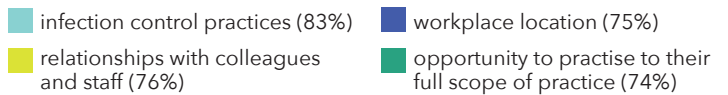
- 38% of respondents have a written contract with their employer. The number of dental hygienists with a contract has increased over 2013 (33%) and 2011 (27%). This represents a positive upward trend in formalizing established contractual arrangements with employers.
- 36% of respondents receive an annual performance review, an increase over 2013 (34%) and 2011 (31%).
- The majority of respondents who collaborate with another professional do so with dentists (93%). Other opportunities for collaboration involve denturists (28%), physicians (25%), massage therapists (9%), and nurses (8%). Compared to the 2013 data, these findings suggest an increasing trend towards interprofessional collaboration between dental hygienists and other health professionals.



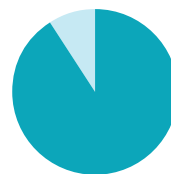
- Respondents are generally very satisfied with their workplace environments. They report being most satisfied with infection control practices (83%), relationships with colleagues and staff (76%), the location of their workplace (75%), and the opportunity to practise to their full scope of practice (74%).



△ Satisfaction with workplace environments

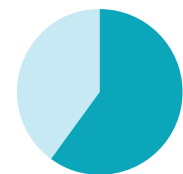


- Generally, respondents feel most valued by their clients (89%), followed by their peers (74%), and their employers (58%).
- In responding to the question regarding dental hygiene process of care, 91% either strongly agree or agree that they have decision-making authority over implementing dental hygiene services. Respondents feel that they have the least decision-making authority (60%) over making referrals to other health professionals.



91%

have decision-making authority over implementing dental hygiene services



60%

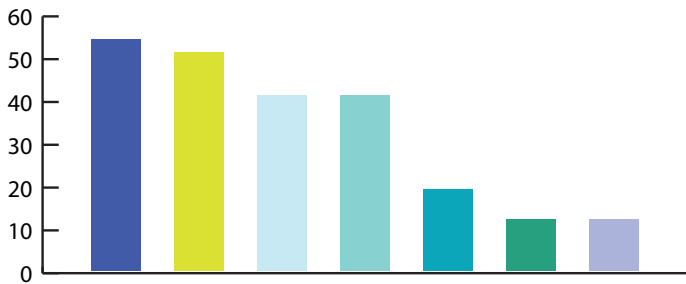
feel that they have decision-making authority over making referrals to other health professionals

- 56% of respondents have influence over or are consulted when their workplaces order dental hygiene supplies and/or equipment.
- 29% of respondents have had a medical issue related to their work as a dental hygienist. Needle stick injuries are the most commonly reported work-related medical issue (10%).
- The most commonly reported pain is in the neck (65%) and shoulders (63%) followed by the lower back (49%).
- 75% of the respondents who reported an injury or health issue note that it affected their ability to work; however, 49% of these worked through the pain despite the injury.

Benefits



- The most commonly reported benefits received by respondents are dental care or dental insurance (54%), paid vacation/holidays (51%), uniform allowance (41%), and professional development (41%). Among the least commonly reported benefits are sick leave (19%), life insurance (12%), and disability insurance (12%).



△ Benefits received by dental hygienists

- dental care or dental insurance
- paid vacation/holidays
- uniform allowance
- professional development
- sick leave
- life insurance
- disability insurance

- 79% of respondents receive benefits, which is an improvement over 2013 (77%) and 2011 (69%).
- Respondents are least satisfied with the benefits they receive (only 25% rate these as very satisfied and satisfied) and with their salary (46%).

Education



49% respondents with a two-year dental hygiene diploma

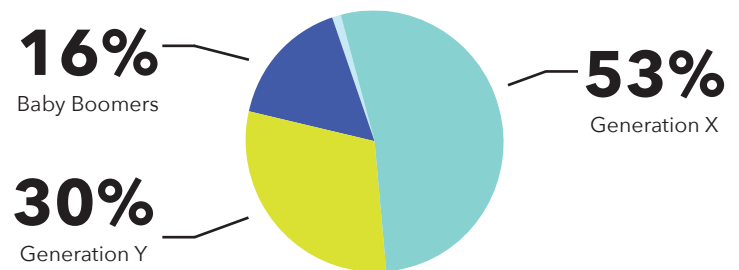
6% respondents with 4-year bachelor's degree in dental hygiene

- △ 41% are educated in a one-year dental assisting plus one-year dental hygiene program, one-year university plus two-year dental hygiene diploma program or have a three-year dental hygiene diploma.

Generation Gap



The generational breakdown of the survey population is dominated by Generation X at 53%, defined as those born between 1962 and 1983. This is followed by Generation Y at 30%, defined as those born between 1984 and 1993, and lastly Baby Boomers at 16%, defined as those born between 1945 and 1961.



The survey also found significant differences between younger (25-34 years of age) and less experienced respondents (0-5 years in the workforce) and their older, more experienced counterparts (45-65 years of age and more than 20 years in the workforce). This result is similar to that from 2013. Respondents in the 25-34 age bracket are more likely to:

- be employed full time in dental hygiene;
- work for more than one employer;
- report that they would prefer to practise more hours per week;
- be paid on an hourly basis; and
- report an increase in salary in the last two years.



Provincial Variance



- 54% of respondents report that provincial regulations do not prevent them from practising to the full extent of their training. If they are prevented from providing services, these services are most often prescription of medications, prescription of radiographs, and administration of local anesthetic.

- Reported hourly pay rates vary considerably by province, ranging from the highest hourly pay rate in Alberta (\$52.95) to the lowest in New Brunswick (\$31.10). These two provinces ranked highest and lowest on the salary scale in 2013 as well.
- Hourly pay rates have generally risen across all of the provinces and territories as compared with 2013 results.



△ Alberta had the highest hourly pay at \$52.95

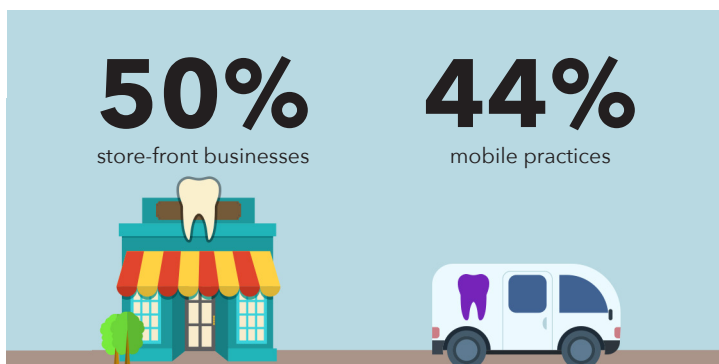


△ New Brunswick had the lowest hourly pay at \$31.10

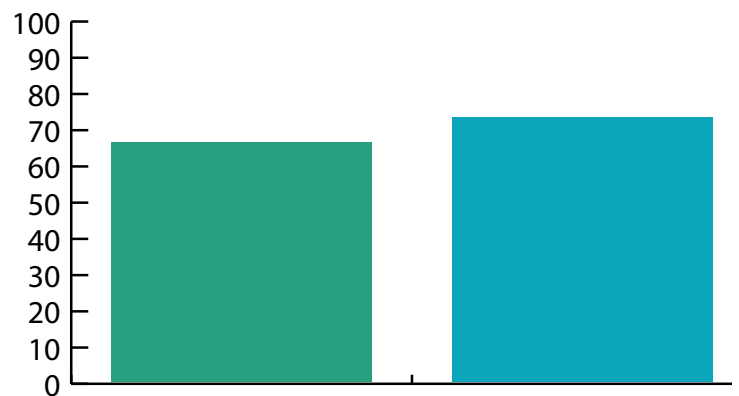
Independent Practice Owners

- 75% of independent practice owners are relatively new, having owned their practice for five years or less. In 2013, 86% reported having owned the practice for 0-5 years.
- Most independent practices are store-front businesses (50%), followed by mobile practices (44%).

- Levels of satisfaction with independent practice appear to be very high, with 73% of respondents rating their satisfaction as very satisfied or satisfied, which is an increase over 2013 (66%).



- Clients of independent practitioners include those who cannot attend a traditional dental practice (58%), those do not have any insurance coverage (41%), and those who access government-funded dental care programs (20%).



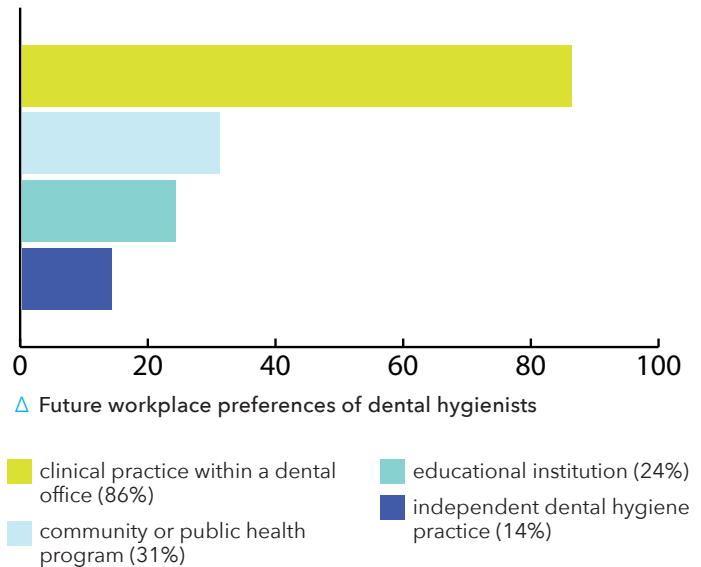
△ Satisfaction with independent practice

■ 2013 ■ 2015

- Key issues affecting independent practice owners are lack of public awareness and the need for business marketing assistance, lack of support from 3rd party insurance plans, and e-billing assistance.

The Future

- Only 4.3% of respondents plan to leave the profession within the next two years, which is consistent with 2013 results (5%).
- 86% of respondents planning to practise for two or more additional years would like to work in a clinical practice within a dental office, followed by working in a community or public health program (31%), educational institution (24%) or in an independent dental hygiene practice (14%).
- 77% of respondents think their local economy will remain the same, with Saskatchewan dental hygienists feeling most optimistic about the economic outlook for their province.



The dental hygiene profession has a deep commitment to disease prevention and to improving the oral and overall health of Canadians. Respondents to the 2015 survey commented frequently on access to care issues. CDHA is committed to working with all stakeholders in both the public and private domains to increase opportunities for dental hygienists to work in innovative practice settings, such as in hospitals and community health centres, and in urban, rural, and northern locations. Together, we will continue to move the profession forward.