



Work stress, job satisfaction and emotional well-being among Canadian dental assistants.

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Abstract: Although dentistry is considered to be a stressful occupation, few data exist on work stress among dental assistants. In a previous paper, the extent and nature of work stress among this group was described and linked to a behavioural outcome; namely, intentions to change jobs or seek work outside of dentistry. In this paper the psychological outcomes of work stress, in the form of job satisfaction and emotional well-being, are examined. Using data collected by a mail survey, it was revealed that the main sources of dissatisfaction for dental assistants were low incomes, lack of opportunity to develop professionally and lack of recognition. Almost one-in-five had scores on a standard measure of emotional distress, which indicated a cause for concern. Work stress proved to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction, and work stress and job satisfaction emerged as significant predictors of emotional well-being. Social support while at work showed direct and interactive effects on job satisfaction but not emotional well-being. Role ambiguity, under-utilization of skills and low self-esteem emerged as important issues. These results are of interest theoretically and have important implications for the way dental practice and dentistry are organized.

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