

AMERICAN DENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



ADEA Dental Hygiene Clinical Licensure Survey Summary and Results

Published September 2016

Suggested Citation:

American Dental Education Association. ADEA dental hygiene clinical licensure survey summary and results. Washington, D.C.: American Dental Education Association, 2016.

For any additional questions about this report, please contact the ADEA Office of Learning at:

American Dental Education Association
655 K St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20001
Tel: 202-289-7201

ADEA Dental Hygiene Clinical Licensure Survey

Key Messages, Findings and Implications for Future Research

1. In March 2014, the ADEA House of Delegates passed Resolution 5H-2014, which recommended that a Task Force be created to examine and report on the elimination of the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure exam for dentistry and dental hygiene.
2. In January 2016, the Task Force disseminated their report and recommendations toward the elimination of the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure examination to the ADEA Council of Allied Dental Program Directors (CADPD) and ADEA Council of Deans.
3. In the spring of 2016, ADEA, in collaboration with the ADEA CADPD, conducted an online survey of dental hygiene program directors to assess the awareness and perceptions of alternative pathways to licensure that could eliminate the human subject/patient component of the examination.
4. The data were analyzed, and the following key findings emerged:
 - Program directors and faculty members are concerned about the cost incurred by the student for the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure examination, including but not limited to examination and licensure fees, patient compensation and travel expenditures.
 - Beyond the cost of the examination, there are many ethical and logistical concerns related to the use of a live patient during examination. Most notably, students encounter difficulty in securing an acceptable patient, which may have ethical implications such as incomplete or postponed care provided to the patient.
 - Overall, there is great support in eliminating the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure examination and finding alternative pathways to assess student competency upon completion of their program.
5. Further research needs to be conducted to better understand the ethical implications related to the use of live patients during examination and to explore the current landscape of alternative pathways to licensure that sufficiently verify competency.
6. To create more awareness of alternative pathways to licensure, stakeholders should examine current institutional implementations of alternative pathways to licensure that could eliminate the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure examination, and report findings to dental educators and various agencies, such as state licensing boards and dental licensing examination organizations. Further, stakeholders need to engage the dental community and provide accessible information on the background, implementation and outcomes of alternative pathways.

Introduction

The ADEA Clinical Licensure Survey was distributed to members of the ADEA Council of Allied Dental Program Directors (CADPD) to gather national data and feedback on the use of human subjects/patients during the clinical licensure examination. The goal of the survey was to better understand perceptions of the human subject/patient component of clinical licensure examinations and to assess dental hygiene program directors' opinions on alternative pathways to licensure for dental hygiene.

Methodology and Respondents

In the spring of 2016, 266 dental hygiene members of the ADEA CADPD were surveyed using an online survey tool. The brief 16-question survey was a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended text entry questions. Reminder emails were sent out at the midway point and close of the survey. Once collected, data were cleansed of any duplicates and non-respondents.

Out of the 156 surveys initially collected, five surveys were removed during data cleaning due to nonresponse. After the non-respondents were eliminated, 151 respondents completed all or some portion of the survey for a final response rate of 57%.

Summary and Key Findings

Respondents were asked to provide feedback and insight on the clinical licensure examination, including but not limited to the overall cost of the examination, ethical implications related to the use of live patients and alternative pathways to licensure that remove the human subject/patient component.

Examination Costs and Securing Patients

Tables 1–5 present information on the cost of the clinical licensure examination as well as the methods students use to secure patients.

Key Findings:

- The vast majority of respondents (94%) reported that they and/or their faculty have concerns related to the cost of the examination and associated licensure fees (*Table 1*).
- In addition to the examination and licensure fees, a significant majority of respondents reported that students compensate patients for their participation (86%) and pay for their patients' travel expenses (85%). Additionally, 74% of respondents indicated that students cover their own travel expenses, and 25% of respondents reported that there are additional costs that students incur, such as site fees and instrument rental fees (*Table 3*).
- Overwhelmingly, the most common method students use to secure patients for the clinical licensure examination is through screenings (99%), with a large percentage of students also using social media (84%) and advertisements (64%) (*Table 4*).

Concerns Regarding the Use of Live Patients

Tables 6–8 present information on faculty’s concerns regarding the human subject/patient component of the examination. Respondents reported on their own concerns as program directors as well as the concerns of their faculty members.

Key Findings:

- A significant majority of respondents (86%) reported that they or their faculty have some concerns related to the use of live patients during licensure examinations (*Table 6*), and of those that indicated a concern, the top issues they reported were students having a difficult time finding patients (94%), ethical concerns (89%) and difficulty in scheduling patients for the exam (77%) (*Table 7*).
- Of the 106 respondents that indicated they or their faculty have ethical concerns related to the human subject/patient component, 93% cited incomplete treatment of patients as the top reason for their concern. Additionally, 92% were equally concerned that students may postpone patient care or pay patients in order to participate in the examination (*Table 8*).

Alternative Pathways to Licensure

Tables 9–14 present information on the awareness and perceptions of alternative assessments of clinical competency that would eliminate the live patient component of licensure examinations.

Key Findings:

- While the majority of respondents were aware of alternative pathways to licensure (65%), 35% were either unsure of or unaware of any alternative pathways (*Table 9*).
- Of the 98 people who reported they were aware of alternative pathways, the top alternative pathways they had knowledge of were portfolios (67%), postgraduate residency (64%) and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) (61%) (*Table 10*).
- When asked if the human subject/patient component of the examination satisfactorily shows students’ competency, a large portion of respondents (78%) indicated that it does not indicate competency (*Table 11*).
- In addition, 75% of respondents feel that graduation from an accredited dental hygiene program is sufficient to verify that a candidate is clinically competent without the human subject/patient component of the licensure examination (*Table 12*).
- Overall, a large majority of respondents supported pursuing alternative pathways to licensure for dental hygiene (86%) and also supported the overall elimination of the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure examination (86%) (*Tables 13 and 14*).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, program directors are strongly in favor of eliminating the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure examination; therefore, alternative pathways to licensure for dental hygienists need to be examined more extensively. Future studies should look at the effectiveness of alternative pathways in satisfactorily showing students’ competency as well as examine the current landscape to observe how alternative pathways are being implemented at an institutional level.

Table 1: Is the cost of examination and licensure fees for students a concern for you and/or your faculty?

	Count	%
Yes	140	94%
Unsure	0	0%
No	9	6%
Total	149	100%

Table 2: Do students compensate board patients for their participation?

	Count	%
Yes	119	80%
No	7	5%
Unsure	19	13%
Do not wish to report	3	2%
Total	148	100%

Table 3: Which additional costs (besides the examination and licensure fees) do students incur for the clinical licensure exam that you and/or your faculty are aware of? (Check all that apply.)

	Count	%
Paying patients (e.g., to participate or to take time off of work)	127	86%
Patient travel expenses (e.g., hotel, transportation or incidentals)	125	85%
Students' own travel expenses (e.g., hotel, transportation or incidentals)	109	74%
Other, please specify	37	25%

Table 4: Which of the following methods do students use to secure patients that you and/or your faculty are aware of? (Check all that apply.)

	Count	%
Screenings	147	99%
Social media	125	84%
Advertisements	95	64%
Formal school program that connects students with patients	55	37%
Other, please specify	11	7%

Table 5: Do students get patients from local dental practices?

	Count	%
Yes	45	30%
No	53	36%
Unsure	49	33%
Do not wish to report	1	1%
Total	148	100%

Table 6: Do you or any of your faculty have any concerns regarding the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure exam?

	Count	%
Yes	119	86%
No	20	14%
Total	139	100%

Source: American Dental Education Association, Clinical Licensure Survey, 2016

Table 7: Please select the concern(s) that you and/or your faculty may have regarding the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure exam. (Check all that apply.)

	Count	%
Students have a difficult time finding patients	112	94%
Ethical concerns (e.g., incomplete treatments, postponing treatments)	106	89%
Students have a difficult time scheduling patients for the exam	92	77%
Travel liability	77	65%
Unfamiliarity with host site	73	61%
Safety concerns for students	57	48%
Safety concerns for patients	56	47%
Infection control (e.g., transporting contaminated instruments)	50	42%
Other, please specify	25	21%

Table 8: Which of the following are ethical concerns regarding the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure exam? (Check all that apply.)

	Count	%
Incomplete treatment of patient	99	93%
Postponing patient care to use as a board patient	98	92%
Students paying patients to participate	97	92%
Students transporting patients	82	77%
Other, please specify	6	6%

Table 9: Are you aware of alternative pathways to licensure for dentists that would eliminate the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure exam?

	Count	%
Yes	98	65%
No	43	28%
Unsure	10	7%
Total	151	100%

Source: American Dental Education Association, Clinical Licensure Survey, 2016

Table 10: Select the alternative pathways to licensure for dentists that you are aware of. (Check all that apply.)

	Count	%
Portfolio	71	67%
Postgraduate residency	68	64%
Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)	65	61%
Integrated assessment within the curriculum	58	55%
Other, please specify	10	9%
None, I haven't heard of these alternative pathways	5	5%

Table 11: In your opinion, does the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure exam satisfactorily show students' competency?

	Count	%
Yes	30	22%
No	109	78%
Total	139	100%

Table 12: Graduation from an accredited dental hygiene program is sufficient to verify that a candidate for licensure is clinically competent without the human subject/patient component of the licensure exam.

	Count	%
Agree	103	75%
Disagree	35	25%
Total	138	100%

Table 13: Do you support pursuing alternative pathways to licensure for dental hygiene?

	Count	%
Yes	130	86%
No	21	14%
Total	151	100%

Table 14: Do you support the elimination of the human subject/patient component of the clinical licensure exam?

	Count	%
Yes	120	86%
No	19	14%
Total	139	100%

Table 15: Were you aware of the ADEA Task Force on Licensure's Recommendations Toward Elimination of the Human Subject/Patient Component of the Clinical Licensure Exam Report?

	Count	%
Yes	84	61%
No	54	39%
Total	138	100%

Source: American Dental Education Association, Clinical Licensure Survey, 2016