

# Ergonomics for Dental Profession: A Priority Step

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## Editorial

Practicing the art of dentistry requires a high degree of concentration and precision. But awkward postures, repetitious hand movements, and persistent vibration to the hand and wrist from a high speed hand piece can make practitioners vulnerable to musculoskeletal disorders. Consider that many dentists often find themselves in a static, uncomfortable position when treating patients. This sustained position can lead to pain, injury, or, in severe cases of musculoskeletal disorders, disability or early retirement [1].

The level of risk depends on the intensity, frequency and duration of the exposure to these conditions. Important risk factors for musculoskeletal disorders among dental professionals, especially when occurring at high levels and in combination are awkward postures during coordinating the relative positions between dentist and assistant, while obtaining optimal view of teeth within the patient's mouth, while providing a comfortable position for the patient or while manoeuvring complex equipment and reach for instruments. Tasks that requiring forceful exertions like tooth extractions place higher loads on the muscles which an important risk factor. Other risk factors include repetition of the same activities, longer duration of the activities.

Good working ergonomics is essential so that work capability, efficiency and high clinical level of treatment can be maintained throughout the working life of dental professionals. Ergonomics can be defined as 'an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely' [2].

Proper ergonomic design is necessary to prevent repetitive strain injuries, which can develop over time and can lead to long-term disability. More studies need to be conducted on the impact of dental work on the development of nerve and muscle pathologies, which would prevent dentists from providing the highest quality of service and could threaten their professional careers.

Meanwhile, the importance of following proper ergonomic principles should be realized so that these problems can be avoided by increasing awareness of the postures used during work, redesigning the workstation to promote neutral positions, examining the impact of instrument use on upper extremity pain, and following healthy work practices to reduce the stress of dental work on the practitioner's body [3].

To conclude with, ergonomics arrangements for dental profession is an essential and priority step. Awareness creation among dental professionals regarding ergonomics need to be created and they must be encouraged to use ergonomics arrangements in their day to day practices.

## References

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