



# IFDH Sustainable Dentistry Survey

## BACKGROUND

Survey #7 in a series supported by Procter & Gamble conducted in June/July 2022.

**Objectives:** To better understand global dental hygienists' practices and beliefs on SUSTAINABLE DENTISTRY to help develop materials and programs on this topic.

**Survey flow:** IFDH → 34 national associations → individual members.

## RESPONDENTS

295 respondents from 24 countries

### Top countries

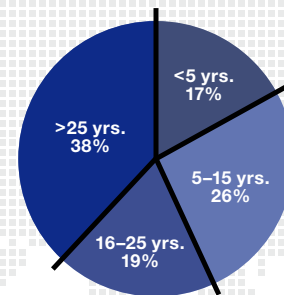
- Canada 19%
- USA 15%
- Portugal 9%
- Korea 8%
- Switzerland 8%
- South Africa 7%
- Finland 6%
- Spain 4%

### Countries with ≤3%:

Belgium, UK, Czech Republic, Australia, New Zealand, Netherlands, Israel, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Malta, United Arab Emirates

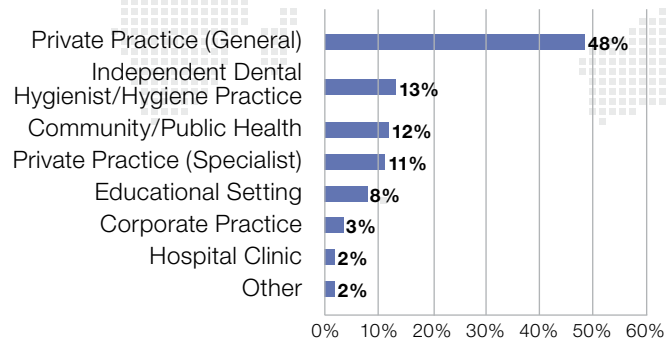
### Years of dental hygiene experience

Skewed towards 25 years of experience or more



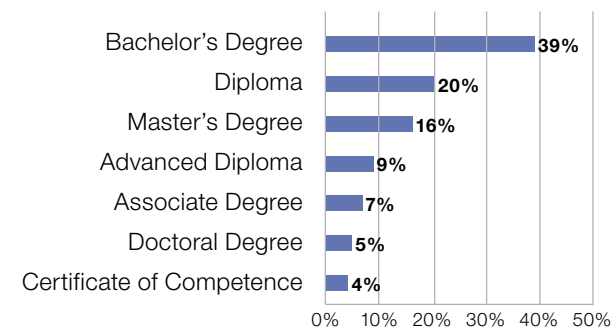
### Work setting

59% are in a private practice setting.  
13% are in independent dental hygiene practices.



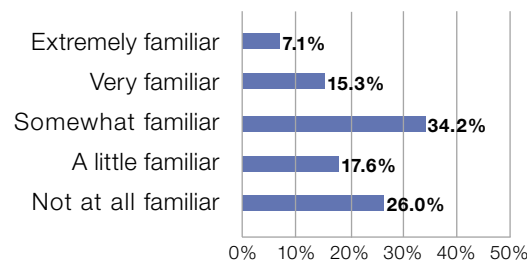
### Education

59% have Bachelor's Degree or Diploma



### How familiar are you with the concept of ‘sustainable dentistry’?

- 22% are extremely or very familiar
  - 44% are only a little or not at all familiar
- N=295



### Which elements below do you associate with sustainable dentistry?

(check all that apply)

For the purpose of this survey, ‘environmentally-friendly’ should be understood as “with a low/lower environmental footprint.”

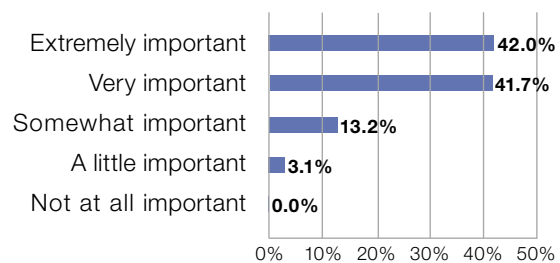
% of respondents	Attribute
65% or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing use of plastic in the practice (80%)</li> <li>Reducing overall waste in the practice (77%)</li> <li>Using environmentally-friendly products in the practice (76%)</li> <li>Using environmentally-friendly equipment (71%)</li> <li>Reducing single-use disposables in the practice (69%)</li> <li>Reducing use of paper in the practice (68%)</li> <li>Reducing chemical waste in the practice (65%)</li> </ul>
59–64%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving energy efficiency in the practice (62%)</li> <li>Focusing on preventive care (61%)</li> <li>Recommending environmentally-friendly home care products (60%)</li> <li>Reducing mercury production in dentistry (59%)</li> </ul>
Less than 59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing emissions from the dental practice (48%)</li> <li>Reducing water use in the practice (45%)</li> <li>Reducing travel to the practice (e.g., treating family members at one time) (43%)</li> <li>Increasing teledentistry appointments (27%)</li> </ul>

N=219; excludes respondents who selected “not at all familiar” with concept

### How important is sustainable dentistry to you (after reading definition)?

For the purpose of this survey, we will define ‘sustainable dentistry’ as “reducing the environmental impact in the practice of dentistry while ensuring infection control and good oral health outcomes.” With this definition in mind, how important is sustainable dentistry to you personally?

- 84% say it’s extremely or very important
- N=295



**Select up to 5 elements that you consider to be extremely important to achieve sustainable dentistry.**

% of respondents who selected in top 5	Attribute
41–65%	Reducing use of plastic in the practice (65%) Reducing overall waste in the practice (62%) Reducing single-use disposables in the practice (52%) Using environmentally-friendly products in the practice (41%)
23–40%	Focusing on preventive care (40%) Reducing chemical waste in the practice (39%) Reducing use of paper in the practice (32%) Using environmentally-friendly equipment (27%) Improving energy efficiency in the practice (26%) Recommending environmentally-friendly home care products (25%) Reducing mercury production in dentistry (23%)
Less than 23%	Reducing water use in the practice (13%) Reducing emissions from the dental practice (11%) Reducing travel to the practice (e.g., treating family members at one time) (9%) Increasing teledentistry appointments (6%)

N=295

**Which of the following actions, if any, has the primary dental practice you work in made specifically to improve the sustainability of the practice?**

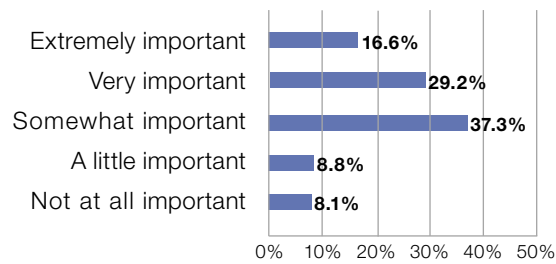
*(check all that apply)*

% of respondents	Attribute
24–40%	Increased focus on preventive care (40%) Reduced use of paper in the practice (36%) Used more digital patient education material vs pamphlets (33%) Reduced use of plastic in the practice (30%) Reduced mercury use (29%) Reduced overall waste from the practice (27%) Reduced single-use disposables in the practice (24%) Used more environmentally-friendly products in the practice (24%)
Less than 24%	Recommended more environmentally-friendly home care (19%) Reduced travel to the practice (e.g., treating family member at same time) (18%) <b>None, we have not made changes to improve sustainability (18%)</b> Improved energy efficiency in the practice (17%) Used more environmentally-friendly equipment (15%) Reduced chemical waste in the practice (15%) Changed product suppliers to one that is committed to sustainability (12%) Reduced water use in the practice (12%) Increased teledentistry appointments (9%) Reduced emissions from the dental practice (7%)

N=295

**Thinking of oral hygiene products you recommend for home care use, how important is it that the product be ‘environmentally friendly’ in order for you to recommend it?**

- 46% say it’s extremely or very important that a product they recommend is environmentally-friendly
- N=295



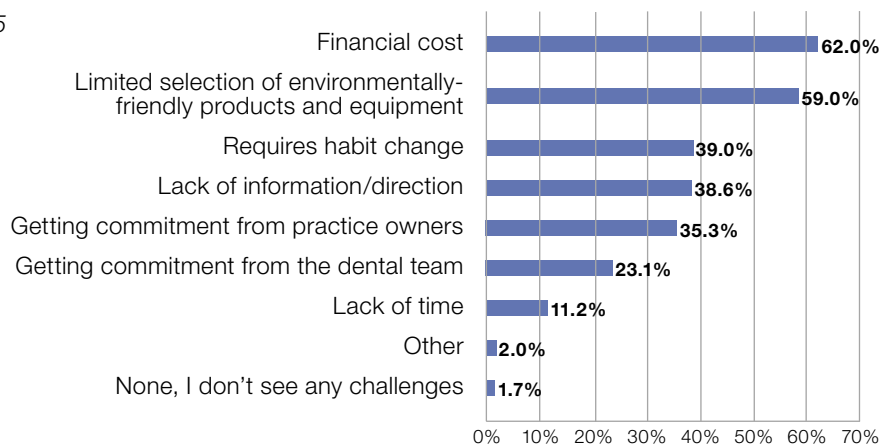
**When you think of a product that is ‘environmentally-friendly’, select up to 5 product attributes that you consider to be extremely important.**

% of respondents who selected in top 5	Attribute
41–52%	Product is effective in maintaining oral health (52%) Product has minimal packaging (51%) Packaging is recyclable (48%) Ingredients are safe for the environment (44%) Product components are biodegradable (43%) Product is recyclable (41%)
27–40%	Product is made from recyclable material (32%) Product packaging is made from recyclable material (30%) Package is reusable/refillable (30%) Manufacturing process follows sustainability principles (27%)
Less than 27%	Ingredients are natural (17%) Non-essential ingredients (e.g., binders, fillers) are eliminated from the product (16%) Manufacturer of product is leader in sustainability (11%) Product use requires little to no water (5%)

N=295

**Please select up to 3 items that you consider to be the BIGGEST challenges to increase sustainability in dentistry.**

N=295



## How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

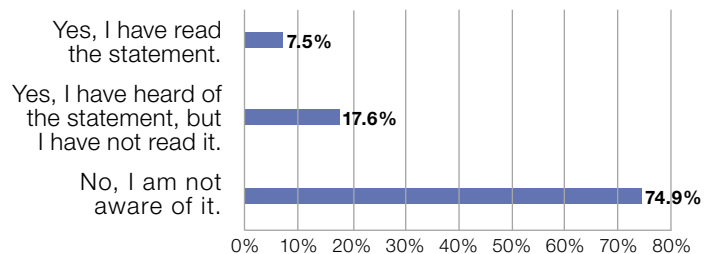
	Top 2 Box	Bottom 2 Box
Dental hygienists have a responsibility to contribute to sustainability in dentistry.	88%	3%
I need more help and education from manufacturers about sustainable dentistry.	87%	5%
Preventive oral care plays a role in reducing emissions.	77%	4%
Dental hygienists should take the lead towards sustainability in dentistry.	70%	4%
My individual actions have a significant impact on achieving sustainable dentistry.	70%	11%
Product effectiveness is more important to me than how environmentally-friendly a product is when I make recommendations.	67%	14%
If the practice owner is not committed to sustainable dentistry, there is little the dental team can do to achieve it.	61%	26%
I am more concerned about the overall environmental impact of the product (including carbon neutral manufacturing) than about the product itself being recyclable.	53%	11%
I favor environmentally-friendly products when I make recommendation to patients.	53%	20%
Manufacturers are taking action to help dental professionals achieve sustainable dentistry.	40%	30%
Dental hygiene associations are taking action to help dental professionals achieve sustainable dentistry.	31%	31%
I have enough information about sustainable dentistry to take action.	30%	56%
There is sufficient published safety and efficacy data supporting environmentally-friendly products.	20%	40%

N=295; Top 2 box = Strongly or somewhat agree. Bottom 2 box = Somewhat or strongly disagree

### Are you aware of the FDI's Sustainability in Dentistry statement?

- 75% are not aware of FDI's Sustainability in Dentistry statement

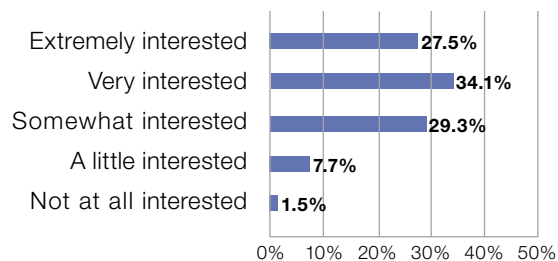
N=295



### How interested are you in learning more about it?

- 51% are extremely/very interested in learning more about it

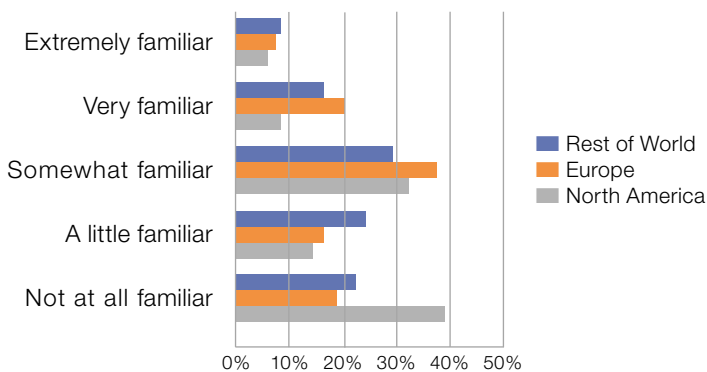
N=273; respondents who have read it were excluded.



## REGIONAL TRENDS

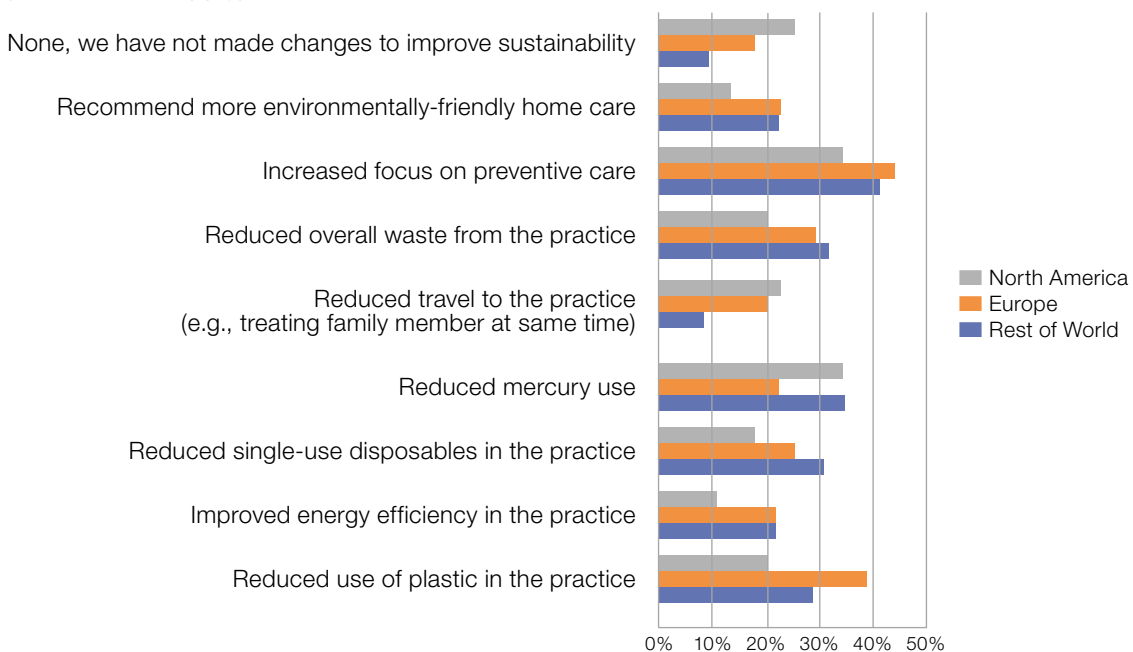
- A break-out by region—North America, Europe, and other regions (Rest of World)—was conducted to look for regional differences.
- Statistical testing was not conducted, but there were some different trends noted across regions.
- In general, respondents from Europe and Rest of World have greater awareness of sustainable dentistry. They also indicated that more action has been taken by the practices in which they work towards sustainable dentistry compared to North American respondents.
- More data on regional differences can be found in the PowerPoint deck accompanying this hand-out.

### How familiar are you with the concept of ‘sustainable dentistry’?



### Which of the following actions, if any, has the primary dental practice you work in made specifically to improve the sustainability of the practice?

(check all that apply)



### **Other IFDH Survey Results**

Click the links below to learn more about other IFDH surveys:

[2022 Elderly Patient Survey](#)

[2021 Pediatric Patient Survey](#)

[2021 Oral-systemic link survey](#)

[2020 Electric toothbrush survey](#)

[2020 Covid Survey](#)

[2019 Toothpaste Survey](#)

The IFDH thanks Procter & Gamble for supporting these surveys.

