



IFDH Survey #10: Prevention: What's Best for the Patient

In November 2024, the IFDH fielded a survey to better understand global practices and beliefs around preventive care. This was the 10th in a series of surveys to help identify opportunities for future educational programs. Topline results are shown below. A summary of full results will be available by the end of January 2025.

Demographics

The survey was sent to 34 national associations. There were 146 respondents, representing 21 countries. The top countries with respondents were:

- USA 25%
- Korea 17%
- Canada 11%
- Portugal 8%
- South Africa 6%
- UK 5%
- Czech Republic 4%
- Ireland 4%

There was good representation across years of practice, but skewed towards more experience.

- 42% of respondents had 15 years or less experience compared with
- 58% who had 16 years or more experience.
- 56% of respondents work primarily in a private practice setting, while
- 11% are in an independent hygiene/therapy practice.
- 55% have a Diploma/Bachelor's degree.

Topline Results

For this survey, the following definition was used:

A "prevention-focused" practice or clinic is one that PRIORITIZES proactive measures to maintain optimal oral health and prevent oral diseases before they develop. A prevention-focused practice allocates time and has ample staff to provide regular, comprehensive in-office preventive care (e.g., screenings, prophylaxes, fluoride treatments, sealants, early disease detection), patient education, evidence-based self-care recommendations, and oral hygiene instruction.

Based on this definition:

- 61% of respondents strongly agreed that their primary practice setting is "prevention-focused",
- 24% somewhat agreed
- 4% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 8% somewhat disagreed, and
- 3% strongly disagreed.

The top 3 benefits of a prevention-focused practice for patients include:

- Better-long term oral health (90%);
- Better quality of life (85%); and
- Better long-term overall health (85%)



The top 3 benefits of a prevention-focused practice for dental hygienists and dental therapists include:

- Greater professional satisfaction (83%)
- Healthier patients (82%); and
- Better relationship with patients (79%)

Approximately 70% of respondents have noticed changes in patients' beliefs, attitudes, or habits toward preventive SELF-CARE and preventive IN-OFFICE care in the past 3 to 5 years. A summary of the changes they have observed will be provided in the full summary.

The top 3 major barriers to patient compliance with preventive SELF-CARE recommendations include:

- Patients' lifestyle makes self-care less effective (e.g., sugary diet, smoking, alcohol abuse) (64%)
- Patients don't understand the long-term benefits of preventive self-care (53%)
- Patients are overloaded and too busy to focus on preventive self-care (48%)

51% of respondents said the majority of preventive self-care recommendations they make to patients are personalized, brand-specific recommendations (rather than generic, non-branded).

The top 3 benefits of personalized, brand-specific recommendations include:

- Helps patients find the right products at the store (77%)
- Patients perceive personalized recommendations as better suited to their needs (63%)
- Ensures patients use the products they need (61%).

We thank P&G for their support of this program.