

European Regional Organisation of the FDI National Report

National Report for France 2020

*** French Dental Association/Association dentaire française (ADF) ***

ERO online plenary session – 17 April 2021

COVID 19

From 10 March until 11 May 2020, France was in lockdown. As dental practices at that time did not have sufficient individual protective equipment, they had to stay closed. Only emergency care was provided, with requests from patients being regulated through a dedicated phone service.

Throughout this first lockdown, dental practice employees went into so-called "partial unemployment" – i.e. were temporarily laid off by their employers – with State aids paying 84% of their salaries.

Several support systems were implemented for dentists. The payment of their social and employer charges was postponed. From their retirement fund, they received a lump-sum aid of €4 500, and from the national health insurance fund, an aid based on their turnover and their charges.

On 11 May, with strict protocols and barrier measures being implemented and more protective equipment available, dental practices were able to reopen. Thanks to the treatment reimbursement system and to the national agreement, the activity of dental practices one month later had reached nearly the same level as before lockdown.

Unfortunately, in the face of a massive resurgence of the epidemic, France went back into lockdown on 30 October until the beginning of December. However, dental practices this time stayed open, with the same protocols and barrier measures.

Changes in the association and its organisation

Nothing to report.

Trends and developments

➤ In professional politics

In May 2018, a new national agreement was signed between the dental profession, the national health insurance fund, and private insurance companies. The new agreement builds a model of dental care more focused on prevention and improves the financial coverage of care and prostheses but, in return, restricts practitioners' fees for several procedures. It came into force on 1st April 2019 with a first series of revaluations and the addition of several procedures to those already covered by the national health insurance fund.

The year 2020 saw the implementation of several more features:

- An increase of 7 to 15% in the price charged for conservative care, depending on the number of surfaces filled.
- The cost of periodontal care in diabetic patients covered up to between €80 and €240, depending on the number of regions treated.
- Extra charge for disabled patients, based on a specific assessment grid.
- A health care basket including fully reimbursable dental prostheses, with capped fees (e.g. ceramic-metallic crowns on incisors, canines and first molars up to €500).
- A health care basket including partially reimbursable dental prostheses, with capped fees.

➤ **In health and social politics**

To improve cooperation between health professionals, the French government created in 2016 the concept of territorial professional health communities¹. These communities bring together health care professionals from a same territory who wish – at their own initiative – to work together on a common health project to address common problems. One of the expected benefits is greater fluidity for patients in the care pathways. In 2020, a great many projects were launched, with an increasing number of dentists.

➤ **In educational politics**

• Vocational training

The year 2020 saw the complete overhaul of undergraduate healthcare studies as announced in 2018, with the aim to open access to these four fields of studies – medicine, midwifery, dentistry, and pharmacy – to a wider variety of profiles. To achieve this purpose, the first year common to all four fields (known as PACES – *première année commune aux études de santé*) was abolished and replaced by two possible channels of access to healthcare studies: a channel specifically dedicated to healthcare, known as PASS (*Parcours spécifique accès santé*), or a three-year university degree with a focus on healthcare, known as LAS (*Licence avec option accès santé*), with a major in a subject of the student's choice (chemistry, biology, law...) and a minor in healthcare. A third channel is also available: students can choose to start with a three-year medical assistant training programme, e.g. in a nursing school, before applying to pursue their studies at university.

All universities are required to offer at least two of these three channels of access.

• Continuing education

All dentists, whatever their type of practice, have a continuing education obligation. It is an ethical and a legal obligation.

¹ These communities are known as CPTS *Communauté professionnelle territoriale de Santé*

The French Dental Association offers continuing education opportunities throughout the year, the highlight of which is its Annual Dental Meeting in November (the 2020 *Congrès de l'ADF* was postponed to 2021 due to the Covid pandemic). The ADF also proposes monthly live Facebook and Youtube chats and regular online continuing education modules as well as several publications.

Dentists can follow their tastes and inclinations in their choice of voluntary continuing education activities. In addition, since 2013, all dentists practising in France must fulfil mandatory continuing education requirements by participating in "Continuing Professional Development" (CPD) programmes. This obligation, which was initially annual but became a three-year obligation in 2016, requires that dentists complete three hours of CPD every three years, on subjects relevant to national and public health priorities.

The French Dental Association has proposed priority orientations for these CPD programmes via the national professional council (CNP)².

CPD programmes must be validated by the CPD national agency (*Agence nationale pour le Développement professionnel continu – ANDPC*) in order to be covered by the relevant funding organisations. The CPD national agency ensures the implementation and monitoring of the training activities by means of a traceability document and covers part of the training costs.

The national dental regulatory body (*Conseil national de l'Ordre des Chirurgiens-dentistes*) is in charge of verifying compliance.

➤ **In the insurance system (public and private health insurance schemes)**

The relations between the different stakeholders of the dental profession have been redefined in a new national agreement. See item II – *Professional politics* for details.

Information re. promotion of the World Oral Health Day

The French Union for Oral Health (UFSBD - Union Française pour la Santé Bucco-dentaire), an ADF member organisation, organises specific activities on behalf of the French dental profession. As WOHD 2020 came just after the beginning of the first lockdown in France, the focus was placed on the dangers of repeated snacking – a habit easily acquired when you are stuck at home and feeling bored or need comforting – and how to avoid exposing your teeth to repeated acid attacks throughout the day.

Further information

The French government, especially in these times of sanitary crisis, encourages job creation and promotes training.

² The national professional council (CNP – *Conseil nationale professionnel*) comprises representative organisations of the dental profession, professional unions, and the ADF member learned societies.

For the dental team, a new route of training has been developed, known as an apprenticeship, based on a work-and-study programme that takes place part in a training centre, part in a dental practice. Remuneration varies, depending on the age of the student and their year of study. Incentive measures have also been implemented to encourage recruitment.

Moreover, dental unions are continuing to work on the creation of a new profession within the dental team, with the mixed competencies of a prophylaxis assistant and a dental hygienist.

Main concerns

The massive inflow into France of graduates with foreign diplomas continues to preoccupy the profession – with a new phenomenon clearly visible, the increase of French students returning to practice in France with a diploma obtained in another EU member country. In 2020, there were 260 (20% of the quota admitted into second year in France).

Points we would like to discuss

Number of years of study and initial training in the various European countries.