



Regional European Organisation of the FDI

National Report

Country: SPAIN

Association: SPANISH DENTAL COUNCIL

***(Consejo General de Colegios Oficiales
de Odontólogos y Estomatólogos de España)***

Venue:

Year: 2020

Please classify your national report by following subjects:

Changes

The Executive Committee is formed by the following members:

President:	Dr Óscar CASTRO REINO
Vice-President:	Dr Francisco José GARCÍA LORENTE
Secretary:	Dr Jaime SÁNCHEZ CALDERÓN
Treasurer:	Dr Joaquín DE DIOS VARILLAS
Executive Director:	Dr Juan Carlos LLODRA CALVO
Vice-Secretary-	
Vice-Treasurer:	Dr Alejandro LÓPEZ QUIROGA
Member:	Dr Luis RASAL ORTIGAS
Member:	Dr Miguel Ángel LOPEZ-ANDRADE
Member:	Dr Guillermo ROSER PUIGSERVER
Member:	Dr Agustín MOREDA FRUTOS
Supernumerary member:	Dr M ^a Concepción LEÓN MARTÍNEZ
Supernumerary member:	Dr Agurtzane MERUELO CONDE
Supernumerary member:	Dr Joan CARRERA GUIÚ
Chairman of the Central Ethics Committee:	Dr Carlos CAÑADA PEÑA

TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS:

In professional politics:

- **Advertising:** The scandals that have shaken the dental sector in Spain recently, have left many affected without money and teeth due to the disorderly closure of clinics. As a result of commercialization, poor management of clinics and aggressive advertising that served as a hook for many patients, it has generated a reflective effect on society. In this sense, it seems that efforts are being made at legislative level to draw up a text that allows the regulation of health advertising, but it has not yet been released yet. Both the Council and the regional chambers are working to raise awareness of the special treatment and consideration that should be given to health advertising. That is why we are urging the political parties to create a framework legislation that regulates health advertising at state level and the Autonomous Communities, through meetings with heads of administration, to develop legislation in this area in accordance with their competences.
- **Specialties:** the Council is holding meetings and conversations with politicians and Ministries of Health and Education in order to request the creation of specialties based on the need for the citizen and to prevent Spanish dentists from being in an unequal situation compared to specialist dentists in the rest of Europe.
- **Intrusion:** It is still a problem that notably affects the profession and that also supposes a risk for the citizens. The current regulation of the crime of intrusion in our penal code is insufficient and does not achieve the intended deterrent effect. From the Collegial organization we continue fighting in a hardening of the sanctions, since it is an illicit activity that puts in risk the health of the population.
- **A plethora of professionals:** In Spain, there are currently around 40,000 registered professional dentists. We have 22 Faculties of Dentistry, of which 12 are public and 10 are private. Therefore, we are the European country with the largest number of Faculties of Dentistry per capita. The new enrolled in the first year totalled almost 1,900 students. The situation is similar to previous years: with a number of registered dentists already exceeding the figure of 36.390, we still cannot get the Regional Governments (who have assumed responsibilities in the areas of Health and Education) to restrict the number of students admitted to the Faculties of Dentistry, establishing a *numerus clausus*. We can find a large number of students from several EU countries (mainly Italy and France) and also international (mainly China) in many private Spanish dental universities.

In health and social politics:

During the last year, legislative activity related to COVID-19 has been frenetic, however, ordinary legislative activity has been scarce, as all efforts have been devoted to the health and economic crisis caused by this exceptional pandemic situation.

- **Health legislation:** There is nothing new about the project of the new Law of Professional Colleges and Services.
- Awaiting the transposition of the **Proportionality Test Directive** (which the acting Government has been working on) and the regulatory changes that will be carried out, internally, after the Health Products Regulations come into force.
- **Royal Decree 601/2019, dated 18 October**, on the justification and optimisation of the use of ionising radiation for the radiological protection of persons with medical exposures was approved: The objective of this RD is to establish new rules, guarantees and requirements to increase the protection of patients and professionals from exposure to ionising medical radiation, transposing Directive 2013/59/Euratom of the European Council dated 5 December.

In educational politics: there is no relevant development in this field.

In the insurance system (incl. the public health insurance and private insurance schemes)

- **Portfolio of Public Dental Services:** against our permanent request of progressively increasing oral health benefits in the State's portfolio of public health services, the last years' economic recession in our country has caused cost-cutting in certain state and regional health services. As an example: the cancellations of certain benefits and limitations of the Children Dental Care Plans of some Autonomous Regions.
The Spanish Dental Association and Dental Colleges has requested the extension of dental treatments included in the services portfolio of Spanish Social Security or, at least, for risk groups: children, elderly people and people at risk of social exclusion, mentally disabled, pregnant women, etc.
However, the Spanish government included in the General State Budget Bill (PGE) for 2021 an allocation of 49 million euros to expand oral health services, which is roughly one euro for every Spanish citizen. The PGE were finally approved in December 2020.

CORPORATE DENTISTRY

Problems with some dental clinic companies/Position of NDA towards dental clinic companies:

The Spanish Dental Association is concerned about the current situation and urges the Government of Spain to safeguard the rights of patients and professionals. Our organisation calls for legislative changes to protect the odontology and patients in addition to control healthcare advertising.

The Dental organization claims the regularization of the industry with the aim to avoid critical situations for patients and to prevent scandals such as those that have occurred in recent years in our country.

Relative to the financing of treatments, the Spanish Dental Association insists on the need to interrupt payment immediately if the dental service is not being respected requesting the debt cancellation. In addition, the patient should have all the information to proceed to that effect.

- **iDental Case:**

A mercantile company created in 2014, made up of a corporate structure made up of a large number of interposed companies. Its business model, the "low cost" clinic, was based on the supposed democratisation of dentistry through very aggressive advertising. They opened 24 clinics throughout Spain: located in industrial estates, with 100,000 square metres and 3,171 employees, 800 of whom were dentists. In October 2017 the business group iDental was sold to the Weston Hill investment fund for more than €25,000,000. The corporate group went bankrupt in 2018, with the consequent cascade closure of all its clinics. This left patients with unfinished treatments and outstanding payments to credit institutions for financing their treatments.

The Central Court of Instruction No. 5 of the Spanish Audiencia Nacional initiated an investigation phase against iDental (corporate group), Weston Hill (corporate group) and their administrators, accumulating all the proceedings in courts throughout Spain for alleged crimes:

- Pyramid Scam
- Misappropriation
- Fraudulent administration
- Forgery in a public document
- Crimes against public health
- Injuries

The procedure is still in the pre-trial phase.

Our organization is personified in the criminal procedure initiated before the National High Court (iDental case), collaborating in every matter we are required for. In addition, the following actions have been raised, at a political level, to prevent the dental sector may be harmed by scandals such as these in the future.

- **Dentix Case**

The Dentix group of dental clinics has filed for voluntary insolvency proceedings as it is unable to meet its debt, in order to avoid bankruptcy. Following the latest news published in Spain, the private equity fund Advent (owner of the VITALDENT Dental Group) has submitted a bid for the acquisition of 80 Dentix clinics in Spain, as well as the Dentix brand. This will involve the resumption and completion of pending treatments for patients affected by this situation and the maintenance of employment linked to the 80 clinics.

Possible Solutions:

- The Spanish Dental Association stresses that it is absolutely necessary to engage the Government of Spain in the dentistry profession, for a legislative change to get a majority of dental professionals in the partnership of las companies linking the dental service with professional ethics to avoid massive professional activities outside the health sector just to get immediate economic benefits.
- The professional organization urges the Government to regulate health publicity around the country to eradicate cases of misleading advertising and refine health offers because people's health is not on sale.
- Intrusion: Stricter penalties.
- More control of health authorities on health centres, services and facilities.
- Sanctioning procedures, by the collegial organization, to registered members when they incur in ethical misconduct.

Changes in fees

Due to the pandemic and the economic impact it has had on the income of dentists in our country, the Executive Committee took the decision to suspend dues for the months of March and April 2020 for all dentists.

Information regarding promotion of the World Oral Health Day

In 2020, for the first time, all face-to-face activities related to World Oral Health Day had to be suspended.

Further information (activities)

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Continuing Education that our Council usually offers to the Regional Chambers ceased to be face-to-face, but, with the collaboration of the Scientific Societies and some private centres, it was maintained with a wide range of online courses and webinars.

The Council also provided comprehensive courses on the action, protocols and measures to be taken regarding the pandemic, which were very well received and attended by 30,648 dentists and 17,722 auxiliary staff members.

Publications:

We continue the editing of our journals: "RCOE", with a purely scientific content, and "Dentistas", with general and informative subjects addressed to professionals and the general public. Both are published in quarterly editions. From 2018 onwards, the RCOE magazine becomes a digital format, maintaining the Dentistas magazine which increases to 6 issues per year. In 2020, "Tips from your dentist", a patient-oriented supplement with up-to-date information on dental pathologies and treatments, was also created.

Campaigns:

In 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic, the state of alarm and the lockdown made it necessary to readapt the planned publicity campaign on Oral Health in the Elderly, turning it mainly into a health education campaign through the mass media (press and radio).

Studies:

The Spanish Oral Health Observatory: was created in early 2015, and it is an instrument to quarterly feel the pulse to the dental profession. To obtain the information there is a panel of 150 sentinel dentists who are quarterly surveyed. The results for the period 2015-2019 have been published in English, French and Spanish <https://www.consejodentistas.es/comunicacion/observatorio-de-la-salud-oral.html>

Oral Health Survey in Spain: 2020: Following the periodic evaluation that our Council carries out every 5 years, the national Oral Health Survey has been conducted in 2020, incorporating new epidemiological information for the age groups 5-6 years, 12 years, 15 years, 35-44 years and 65-78 years. The results are published at: <https://rcoe.es/articulo/115/encuesta-de-salud-oral-en-espaa-2020>

Specific COVID space: our website has a large specific space with a wealth of information on COVID-19, including clinical protocols, various documents and technical reports, infographics and summaries of relevant publications, among other information of interest to dentists in Spain.

Performances:

International presence: Our Association has attended several international events:

CED

General Meetings:

- ONLINE Brussels (November 2020)

Working Group meetings online:

- CED Oral Health
- CED Safety Patient



- CED EPQ Education and Professional Qualifications
- CED Dental Materials and Medical Devices

FEDCAR

- Paris- November 2020 (General Meeting Online)
- France-Spain bilateral online meeting (May 2020)

ERO

- ERO Dental Team- Online meeting June 2020

Professional Directory of Dentists: The update is still in progress and it depends on the Ministry of Health.

Congress of Health Law (Spanish Association of Health Law): Collaborating in round tables and workshops.

Implementation of support programs for collegiate giving up smoking and anti-smoking programs in dental clinics, in collaboration with the National Committee for Smoking Prevention.

MAIN CONCERNS

- **Misleading health advertising**
 - **Problems with new models of professional practice (corporate clinics)**
 - **Professional plethora**
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