



G36 The Integration of Forensic Dentistry/Catastrophe Preparedness Course Into a Dental Hygiene Bachelor of Science Program Using the American Board of Forensic Odontology (ABFO) Curriculum Guidelines: A 12-Year Study

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After attending this presentation, attendees will recognize the value of incorporating forensic classes in pre-licensure dental and dental hygiene curriculum. This presentation will explain the contents for the implementation of the scope of the course, interpret the data as a favorable indication for incorporation in education, and describe the survey results from professionals who have completed the courses.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by demonstrating the value of the incorporation of the ABFO Guidelines on Forensic Odontology into dental and dental hygiene programs. Attendees will come to value the incorporation of the Catastrophe Preparedness curriculum in course offerings and appreciate the effects these courses have on future interest and participation by dentists and dental hygienists.

A Forensic Odontology/Catastrophe Preparedness course is uncommon in dental and dental hygiene program curricula. The addition of these types of courses has the potential to raise professional awareness and effect future participation in forensic dentistry for new dental professionals and the discipline as a whole. Core Content of Forensic Odontology courses are in place and published by the ABFO. Using these as a guideline, a Forensic Dentistry/Catastrophe Preparedness course is offered at New York University College of Dentistry. This study cumulates 12 years of surveys taken by dental hygiene students upon completion of the Forensic Dentistry/Catastrophe Preparedness from the years 2005 to 2016. Surveys were completed by 85 dental hygiene students who completed the course. It sought to measure students' perceptions of gaining advanced knowledge in core content recommended by the ABFO and courses offered by the National Center for Disaster Preparedness housed at Columbia University in New York for the preparedness modules. The Catastrophe Preparedness Modules are based on the center's competencies and are designed to gain core knowledge for preparedness and response for disasters at work, at home, and in the community.

The survey consisted of 18 questions with multiple-choice answers. A total of 85 students completed the surveys, which represents 100% participation. All of the students willingly participated each year. There were no identifiers nor compensation for participation or consequences for refusal to participate. The survey asked questions concerning gaining knowledge from each of the modules. The survey also sought to relate the reasons for students taking the course and if it affected their future plans to seek further education and participation in forensic dentistry and catastrophe preparedness.

A descriptive analysis was completed and the surveys indicate significant acceptance and satisfaction with the course objectives, content, and experiences. Fifty-nine percent of the students stated they are interested in furthering this type of education. Fifty-two percent stated they planned to join a forensic team and 35 percent stated they plan to join a reserve corps for preparedness and response. Ninety-five percent stated they were prepared in the event of a bioterrorism episode. This study found that students are accepting in expanding their knowledge and experience in this field of study.

From this study, it is clear that the published guidelines for core content for both forensic odontology and catastrophe preparedness in these courses should be a model for the educational experiences and that these educational experiences should be incorporated as essential information for future dental professionals. The results also support the interest and potential for future involvement in the science by students who completed the course. The forensic community will come to value the incorporation of ABFO guidelines on forensic odontology into dental and dental hygiene programs and the effects these courses have on future interest and participation. The incorporation of Forensic Dentistry/Catastrophe Preparedness courses in dental and dental hygiene curricula should become more widespread.

Forensic Dentistry, Dental Hygiene Curriculum, Catastrophe Preparedness