

Glass ceilings and glass escalators in the Canadian oral health workforce

Gupta, N. (2025). Glass ceilings and glass escalators in the Canadian oral health workforce. *CRDCN Research-Policy Snapshots*, 4(1).
<http://hdl.handle.net/11375/30916>

Context

Oral health is a key component of overall health, but many Canadians do not access dental care services. The newly expanding Canadian Dental Care Plan recognizes the crucial role of dental professionals in service delivery, however it does not address potential impacts of labour market imbalances. This study used census data and statistical decomposition analyses to assess gender imbalances in the dental workforce in relation to compensation. Results may help inform human resources planning to counter gendered inequalities as a challenge for the health and dental care sector to attract and retain talent.

Key finding(s) from the research

This research found evidence of persistent gendered wage gaps in the dental workforce: a 'glass ceiling' in dentistry (women dentists earned significantly less than men, despite numerical parity), and a 'glass escalator' among dental hygienists (men earned significantly more, despite representing merely 3% of this workforce).

Population(s) studied: Adults aged 25–54 working as a dentist or a dental hygienist/therapist

Research dataset(s) used: 2021 Canadian population census

Policy implications for this research

Issues of gender and other imbalances in the dental workforce have been understudied. The Canadian Dental Care Plan, being phased in over 2022–2025, does not address underlying imbalances in the dental workforce and thus may miss significant opportunities for gender equity promotion.

Policy area(s) this research can inform: Health; Income, pensions, spending and wealth; Labour

Read the full article

Gupta, N., & Miah, P. (2024). Imbalances in the oral health workforce: A Canadian population-based study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 24(1), 1191. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-024-11677-7>