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## **INCLUSION OF MEDICAL EMERGENCIES SYLLABUS IN OUR DENTAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The prevention, diagnosis, and management of medical emergencies are of utmost importance in the practice of dentistry.

Dental students and dental surgeons must be well trained and prepared to manage all possible medical emergencies in their daily professional practices. The team must be competent and confident in handling the initial basic emergency treatment with quality.

Proper management of life-threatening medical emergencies may lead to the prevention of possible death and complications. This may also avert the psychological trauma that the healthcare professional may go through and the stigma attached to the hospital or clinic. Besides that, the ethical and legal implications of medical emergencies related to the obligations of the healthcare practitioner cannot be overlooked.

The teaching of medical emergencies in our dental schools starts at the pre-clinical undergraduate level. However, the program is not well structured. Despite the consensus on the importance of training in medical emergencies, several international studies show unsatisfactory results by demonstrating low knowledge and confidence of professionals in managing medical emergencies and first aid. As a result of these international research findings, there has been a paradigm shift in teaching undergraduate students in most developed countries. The fundamental change in the approach now is emphasizing on a more competency-based curriculum and more hands-on teaching. Hence the need for a revision and inclusion of medical emergencies in our curricula in Ghana.

We need a comprehensive simulation-based training program for our clinical year dental students. There is a tendency for some dental schools to concentrate on theoretical training while not paying attention to the practical aspect.

Creating an emergency medicine department or unit solely responsible for teaching both the theoretical and practical aspects of the program can help us achieve a more structured curriculum.

The governing body responsible for accrediting tertiary institutions in Ghana (GTEC) should make it mandatory to have a well-structured medical emergency course included in our curriculum. Besides that, all stakeholders should agree on a minimum number of credit hours.

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Refresher courses and workshops for both dental students and dental practitioners should be organized and certified every two years by the Medical and Dental Council.

Guidelines on medical emergencies should be formulated by a governing body of medicine and dentistry to be adhered to by all healthcare professionals.

The preventive aspect of medical emergencies cannot be overemphasized. The use of proforma history forms, thorough medical, drug, and allergic history taking, and recording of vitals can lead to early detection of possible risk factors for intervention.

Finally, all healthcare practitioners, including the clinical dental students and the para-dental staff, should have some appreciable knowledge and training in medical emergencies. There should be a law to back the healthcare practitioner to prescribe and apply emergency medication in the event of medical emergencies.

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