

ABSTRACT.

This study was done to determine the nature of utilization of dental auxiliaries and medical emergencies in private dental surgeries in Kenya. A self-administering questionnaire with pre-paid postage was mailed to 138 dentists. 27.5% responded. 81.6% used dental auxiliaries and the main reason was to improve efficiency in managing patients. 93.5% of the auxiliaries were on-job trained secondary school graduates. 63.2% of the respondents delegated duties which were mainly non-clinical. 26.3% did not delegate any duties. In a descending order, the reasons for non-delegation were: that it would be risky to patients, not allowed by law, they did not find it necessary and that auxiliaries were not held responsible if something went wrong. The main duties delegated to the auxiliaries were cleaning of instruments and sterilization, mixing of restorative materials and preparing amalgam. Delegation was done primarily based on auxiliaries' capability to perform the procedure and meet the set standards. 57.9% indicated that they rarely encountered medical emergencies. Syncope was the commonest emergency encountered. 72.7% indicated that auxiliaries could not handle medical emergencies because they were not trained. It is concluded that most dentists did not delegate clinical duties to dental auxiliaries and medical emergencies were rare.