

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Page 2: Your demographics

Q1 Your details

Name

Varshi Lallu

Email

[Redacted]

Q2 Your submission is in the capacity as

Other (please specify):
BOH
student

Page 3: The proposal

Q3 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the 18-year age limit for restorative activities from the OHT scope of practice including: accredited, gazetted programmes allowing oral health therapists to perform restorative treatment on patients 18 years and older an exclusion, such as "Restorative treatment on patients 18 years and older", being placed on oral health therapists' scopes of practice until they complete an accredited adult restorative programme which will allow them to apply to have the exclusion removed (noting that the activities registered oral health therapists can currently perform within their scope of practice remain unchanged).

Strongly agree

Page 4: Your support

Consultation on the age limit for restorative activities in the oral health therapy scope of practice

Q4 Please describe why you support the proposal

Presently, 50% of the population aged 18 and above do not regularly attend the dentist, highlighting the need to restructure the current dental care system to encourage attendance. Removal of this restriction will encourage attendance by increasing access to a dental professional and hence is the sort of restructuring the dental care system needs. Furthermore, by allowing OHTs to complete simple restorative work, patients will no longer have to wait for referrals and dentists will be able to focus on more complex cases, making for a more efficient system. The introduction of midlevel providers in other healthcare sectors has also been successful, such as Nurse Practitioners reducing the pressure on doctors and increasing patient access. So, why would midlevel providers, i.e. OHTs, not be useful within the dental care system?

OHTs already have extensive clinical practice and knowledge in restorative work, in both, the primary and permanent dentition, as part of their dental therapy skill set. Furthermore, the tooth morphology of an individual over the age of 18 and one under the age of 18 does not differ. The caries diagnosis process and skills also do not change after the age of 18. So why are OHTs only deemed competent to complete restorations on patients under the age of 18. The current restriction is simply a convenient, arbitrary age limit which does not correlate with the competency or knowledge of OHTs.

Concerns have been raised regarding OHTs' ability to safely treat older patients. I agree that patient safety is of utmost importance and therefore, should be ensured. OHTs, however, are capable of safely treating older patients, even those with complex medical histories as a result of the pharmacology knowledge that OHTs learn during their degree. OHTs already safely treat over 18s, even those with complex medical histories, as part of their dental hygiene skill set. Furthermore, OHTs are aware of their scope and the restorative treatment that they can provide and when they should be referring. The consultative professional relationship between OHTs and dentists which is already in place will further ensure that OHTs only treat suitable patients.

Concerns have also been raised on the implications of removing the age restriction on the community oral health service and the oral health of New Zealand children. Meeting the needs of children should not be the sole responsibility of OHTs. Likewise, meeting the needs of the older population should not be the sole responsibility of dentists. Both professions should work with both population groups, utilising their unique skills, to improve the oral health of all New Zealanders.

Page 5: Your concerns

Q5 Please describe your specific concern/s with the proposal

Respondent skipped this question

Page 6: Details about OHT scope, qualifications and competencies

Q6 Do you have any specific feedback on the proposed amendments to the OHT scope of practice, prescribed qualifications or competencies as set out in appendices 1 & 2?

No

Page 7: Specific comments on the proposal

Q7 Please provide us specific comments related to the OHT scope, qualifications and competencies.

Respondent skipped this question

Page 8: Anything else

Q8 Do you have any further comments on the proposal? **No**

Page 10: Last thoughts

Q9 Please provide us your feedback

Respondent skipped this question
