



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Consolidation of the Canadian Dental Practice Continues

Toronto, ON – July 7, 2015 – Based on tracking long term trends, the make-up of the typical Canadian dental practice continues to show consolidation, according to results from the DIAC (Dental Industry Association of Canada) Nineteenth Annual Future of Dentistry Survey. While the number of patients being treated per day per respondent has remained relatively consistent over the past eight years, there have been some real shifts in the practice profile appearing since the 2008 study.

As first reported in 2013, the trend towards recent Canadian dental graduates taking longer to set up their practices than those who graduated in past decades is continuing and, in fact, appears to be accelerating. The number of practice owners taking one year or less to set up or buy their practice after graduation is now down to 29% (as opposed to an average of 33% over the last three years and much lower than the average 42% from 2007 to 2011). On the other hand, 12% of owners took 10 years or more to set up or buy their practice after graduation. This represents an all-time high (up from 7.7% last year and an average of 9.8% from 2007-2013).

The established practice is also seeing major changes in its make-up. The 2015 survey confirms that there is a trend towards increasing numbers of dentists in the practice. In 2015, 36% identified themselves as sole practitioners (down from an average of 40% the last seven years) while those practices with five or more dentists (including the respondent) was up to 9% (an all-time high and up from an average of 6.4% the last 12 years). As might be expected, this has been accompanied by an increasing number of operatories in the average practice. Practices with three or fewer operatories have been in steady decline since the survey began, a real drop of 27% since 1997 (58% in 1997 versus 31% in 2015). Two-thirds (65%) of respondents in 2015 had 4 or more operatories, with 28% having more than five (up from 23% last year and up from the average of 19% from 1997-2007).

Dentists are also spending more time in the practice, with 17% of dentists now spending over 250 chairside days (an all-time high as opposed to an average of 13.7% at that level from 2011-2014). This finding is reinforced by a drop in those spending Under 100 days chairside in 2015 (4.0% as opposed to 5.1% in 2014). At the same time, the number of practice hygiene days is once again increasing. After having levelled off over the previous three annual surveys, nearly forty-five percent (44.8%) of 2015 respondents had 5 or more hygiene days per week (an all-time high and up from an average of 38% over the last eight years).

Yet, despite all of this, dentists are seeing no more patients per day today than they have on average over the past eight years. More than three-quarters of dentists (77.2%) (similar to the last four years:

77% last year, 77% in 2013, 78% in 2012 and 78% in 2011) treated less than 15 patients per day in 2015, with over half (52%) treating between 6-10 patients and 22% treating 11-14 patients in an average day. On an overall basis, dentists treated 12.4 patients in an average day in 2015 (almost exactly the same as the average 12.5 patients seen over the last eight years).

It may be extrapolated that the delay in setting up practices has been a function of the recent poor economy's impact on patient loads combined with the rising costs of education and practice set-up for the younger dentist. For those owning established practices, the trend may well be a function of sharing rising expenses in the face of a static patient load or as an exit strategy for the older dentist.

Almost 1000 practicing Canadian dentists responded to this year's survey (similar to the response achieved over each of the previous fifteen years) with a good proportional distribution across all regions of the country. Based on this response rate, overall 2015 survey results have an accuracy of +/- 3.3% 19 times out of 20.

Source: Nineteenth Annual Future of Dentistry Survey
 Dental Industry Association of Canada / Eric P. Jones & Associates Inc.

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