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Elements of entrustable professional activities for dental educators: a scoping review

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Abstract Background Assessing the competencies of health professions educators remains a significant challenge, prompting the consideration of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) as a potential solution. EPAs represent responsibilities that individuals can be entrusted to perform once they have demonstrated sufficient competence and reliability. Originating from the complexities of competency-based medical education, the concept of EPAs is still relatively new in the field of dentistry.

To date, most published EPAs focus primarily on dental students, with limited attention given to their application for dental educators. Therefore, the rationale for this review was to systematically explore the existing literature on EPAs for dental educators, providing a foundation for the future development of structured and effective EPA frameworks tailored to dental education. Methods Addressing the research question- What are the elements of EPAs for dental educators, as described in the literature? - the review adhered to the Joanna Briggs Institute scoping review framework and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses for Scoping Reviews methodology (PRISMA-ScR). Employing a rigorous three-step search strategy across five electronic databases (PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, Cochrane Library and ProQuest), the review includes articles published between January 1, 2005 and October 1, 2024 with eligibility criteria targeted papers published in English with keywords/Search term ("Entrusted Professional Activities" OR "Entrustable Professional Activities" OR "Entrustable profession* activit*") AND ("Dental Educator*" OR "Dental Education" OR Dentistry). The results were summarized, coded and thematically categorized and mapped to existing competency for dental educators. Results The review scoped five articles that described a total of forty-three (43) EPAs. Seven (7) of these EPAs were found to overlap; therefore, they were consolidated to four (4) EPA statements following a consensus, resulting in a total of 40 final EPA statements. The review yielded seven (7) themes: Teaching; with five EPAs, Bedside Teaching; with seven EPAs, Surgical Teaching skills; with 7 EPAs, Mentoring and coaching; with two EPAs, Research and scholarships; with eight EPAs, Educational development; with seven EPAs and Assessment; with four EPAs. Conclusions This review established a foundation for a larger study designed to develop a framework of EPAs tailored specifically for dental educators.

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