



SASKATCHEWAN DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION

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SDHA Laser Policy Position Statement - 2016

In February 2014, the Saskatchewan Dental Hygienists' Association (SDHA) first established a position statement regarding the use of lasers by registered dental hygienists for periodontal treatment. At that time, a commitment to perform a bi-annual review of this policy as it related to current research and practice was made.

It is the SDHA's primary responsibility to ensure the public receives safe, competent dental hygiene care, and thus the establishment of policies/guidelines relating to scope of practice falls within the SDHA's Council's mandate.

In February 2016, a working group was struck that included SDHA Council members, and other SDHA dental hygiene members. The following review was performed:

- Consultation with all SK Periodontists
- Consultation with the Director of the School of Dental Hygiene, SK Polytechnic
- Consultation with the Dean of Dentistry, University of Saskatchewan
- Consultation with laser experts/companies across Canada
- Consultation with the College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan
- Review of the position statements from the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP)
- Review of the position statements from the Canadian Academy of Periodontology (CAP)
- Review of the current research in the field
- Review of policy statements of other Canadian Dental Hygiene Regulatory Authorities

Based on this review, the SDHA's position statement regarding the use of lasers by dental hygienists for periodontal treatment remains unchanged: The SDHA does not allow the use of lasers in the treatment of periodontal disease, or other oral conditions (aphthous ulcers, geographic tongue, etc).

The SDHA has adopted this position through the review of research and consultation with experts. There continues to be a lack of scientific evidence on the efficacy of lasers in the treatment of periodontal disease and there is potential to cause permanent thermal damage to bone and tooth root structure if used inappropriately. In addition, laser technology is not utilized or supported for the treatment of periodontal disease by Saskatchewan Periodontists, nor is it taught as part of the curriculum of either the dental hygiene or dentistry programs. It is important to note that The Canadian Academy of Periodontology (CAP) and the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) do not recommend or support the use of lasers in the treatment of periodontal disease.

The SDHA Council respects that current research and practice must continually be considered. As such, this policy and related literature will be reviewed bi-annually (next review in February 2018).

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact Kellie Watson, Registrar-Executive Director at sdha@sasktel.net or 306-931-7342, extension 4.

References:

1. <http://www.joponline.org/doi/pdf/10.1902/jop.2011.114001>
2. <http://www.cda-adc.ca/jcda/vol-76/issue-2/10702.pdf>
3. <http://www.cap-acp.ca/en/public/lasers.html>
4. <http://walshperiodontist.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Lasers-and-the-Chronic-Treatment-of-Periodontitis.pdf>
5. <http://www.joponline.org/doi/pdf/10.1902/jop.2006.050417>