

Policy Statement 6.14 – Radiation Safety

Position Summary

Radiation safety practises should be followed by appropriately trained and qualified practitioners. Any authority which develops radiation safety codes, guidelines and/or standards, relevant to dentistry, should seek expert dental opinion from the ADA.

1. Background

- 1.1. The radiation doses delivered by dental radiographic equipment to patients, vary according to the type of equipment used. Radiation protection is important for occupational exposure of dentists, their staff and for the population at large including dental patients and accompanying people within dental facilities.
- 1.2. The Code of Practice and Safety Guide “Radiation Protection in Dentistry, Radiation Protection Series No. 10 ” (2005) published by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency establishes the responsibilities of those involved in dental radiology, the requirements for equipment, shielding and siting, image receptors and film processing, and procedures to minimise exposure to ionising radiation.
- 1.3. Radiation safety practises ensure that patients, accompanying people, dentists and allied dental personnel are exposed to the minimum of risk while taking advantage of the diagnostic benefits of dental radiology.
- 1.4. Attaining the lowest reasonably achievable radiation exposure and maximum diagnostic outcome is applicable to all dental radiology.
- 1.5. Optimal imaging, and interpretation of images is essential to achieve the maximum diagnostic capability in all radiography.
- 1.6. Performing dental radiography and radiology requires appropriate training.
- 1.7. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists publishes Position Statements, Guidelines, Policies and Practice Guidelines on medical radiology.
- 1.8. Dento-maxillofacial Radiology is recognised by the Board as a speciality of dentistry.
- 1.9. Radiology is regulated by the states and territories.

Definitions

- 1.10. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.11. DENTAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency via the Board to provide dental care.
- 1.12. DENTAL RADIOGRAPHY is the process of taking intra-oral and extra-oral radiographs.
- 1.13. DENTAL RADIOLOGY is the use of radiographs to diagnose diseases and developmental conditions of the teeth and jaws which are often hidden from direct view on the surfaces of teeth and oral tissues.
- 1.14. MEDICAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Medical Board of Australia to be able to use the title Medical Practitioner and be recognised to receive Medicare and other benefits.
- 1.15. RADIATION SAFETY ACT is a Federal, State or Territory Act that regulates the practice of radiology.
- 1.16. RADIOGRAPH is a digital or analogue image generated by the interaction of x-ray photons with an image receptor or film sensitive to x-ray photons.

This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 5.15 Consent to Treatment & 6.22 Dento-Maxillofacial Cone Beam Volumetric Tomography.

2. Position

- 2.1. Dental radiography should only be prescribed by appropriately trained and qualified dental and medical practitioners.
- 2.2. Dental radiography should only be performed by suitably trained personnel.
- 2.3. Dentists and allied dental personnel must take all practical measures to minimise the risks of radiation exposure during dental radiography.
- 2.4. Any authority which develops radiation safety codes, guidelines and/or standards, relevant to dentistry, should seek expert dental opinion from the ADA.
- 2.5. Radiation safety regulations, codes, standards and guidelines for dental practice should be evidence-based and nationally uniform. .
- 2.6. The Board and practice accreditation authorities should use the guidelines provided by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) as the standard for radiation safety in dentistry.

Policy Statement 6.14

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