



Page 2: Your demographics

Q1 Your details

Name **Dr Jareth Lau**
Email

Q2 Your submission is in the capacity as **dentist or dental specialist**

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 disagree**

Page 4: Your support

Q4 Please describe why you support the proposal **Respondent skipped this question**

Page 5: Your concerns

Q5 Please describe your specific concern/s with the proposal

I am writing in concerned opposition to the proposed change. Currently we have an aging population with increasingly complex medical and health situations faced by our patients. As a dentist, I have been trained for five years to be able to diagnose, treatment plan and treat patients across a vast medical spectrum. Conversely, the OHT training programme does not provide anywhere near enough education on the physiology of the human body, disease, pharmacology and management of complications required to treat the scope of adult patients proposed.

In addition, the children of New Zealand, for whom there are already unacceptably long waiting times in many DHBs across the country, will be further neglected as OHTs pursue the proposed increased scope. This neglect will have long-term health consequences for these children into adulthood (e.g. poor dental and dietary education and practices leading to tooth loss, pain, poor health such as diabetes) thus increasing the burden on the already overstretched public health system.

The OHT training programme has minimal restriction on entry so the academic and social tests that dentists pass to be accepted into dental school, are not required in order to be an OHT. Dentists have proven themselves to be capable of providing the standard of care that our patients require. Furthermore, the OHT training programme is two years shorter than the Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree. This does not allow enough time to comprehensively learn about all of the treatment options required to perform dentistry, nor the complications of dental procedures that we manage on a routine basis.

We should be improving the standard of care for dental patients in New Zealand, not watering it down by allowing a lesser-trained workforce to treat patients beyond the scope of their training.

There are much better and safer ways to improve the oral health of the population, reduce the burden of oral disease and increase affordability. These include, but are not limited to, removing GST from dentistry, making community water fluoridation a central government mandate, taxing highly sugary and acidic drinks and increasing education and awareness of dental health from a young age (which OHTs should be focusing their efforts on!). Let's try and focus on prevention and good health, not make it look like we're doing the right thing by putting poorly-equipped ambulances at the bottom of the cliff.

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? **Yes**

Page 10: Last thoughts

Q9 Please provide us your feedback

Please focus on the wellbeing of patients and their right to make fully informed choices about their dental health. This means seeing a dental professional who can offer and provide all of the treatment options, not just the ones that OHTs have been trained to provide. Please make a decision based on health outcomes, not political points scoring.