



## Examining the Mental Health Status of Dental Assistants in Canada Introductory Letter

Dear Dental Assistants:

The Canadian Dental Assistants' Association (CDAA) would like to invite you to participate in a national study that examines mental health and the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our members. As essential health care workers, providing service to Canadians during the pandemic, dental assistants are uniquely placed to assess the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their mental health.

In mid-2021, the CDAA became a knowledge user partner for the Health Professionals Workforce Partnership proposal to address health worker burnout. Building on this initial phase, the HPWP will utilize a grant received from the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) to create a toolkit of interventions aimed not only at the individual, but at the team and organizational levels to address the factors causing or exacerbating burnout and mental health followed by an evaluation of a customized approach. This project, entitled: *Addressing the Harms of COVID-19 on the Health of the Canadian Health Workforce* will require data from each of the participating professions. As a collaborator on this project, and a member of the Advisory Committee, the CDAA will need to provide critical insights and develop tools that will address the needs of dental assistants. This survey will assist the CDAA in completing the work on the *Addressing the Harms of COVID-19 on the Health of the Canadian Health Workforce* project over the coming two years.

**Purpose:** Inviting members from the CDAA, this study will gauge and compare the level and impact of mental health issues, including stress and burnout, as well as mental illness of dental assistants within the Canadian health care system.

We would like to determine and examine the current state of mental health in our profession and provide insight and opportunities for future initiatives.

This study is intended only for those individuals who have reached the age of majority in their province of residence at the time they participate in the survey.

The study is accessible in both official languages from **May 12 – June 6, 2022 at midnight EST** at the following links:

English survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPNWHDP>

French survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P7Y9R6V>

**Time:** The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions on different rating scales regarding your current mental health (e.g., stress, burnout mental health issues, psychological distress) and your quality of work-life (e.g., stressors, satisfaction).

**Confidentiality:** You will be participating in this study **confidentially**. All the information provided can be considered anonymous and will be aggregated for dissemination purposes. We will not ask you to provide personal or workplace identifiable information.



**Benefits:** Although you may not personally benefit from participation, other than having your opinion heard, your responses will provide valuable information. It is anticipated that the study results will provide future benefits to participants by identifying the impact work environments have on mental health, which may support initiatives helping to relieve workplace burden. The information from this study will also support members from all organizations in understanding the mental health challenges facing our profession. The study results will be made publicly available.

There will be no incentive or remuneration provided to individuals participating in the study.

**Risks:** As this study does not collect personal identifiers and does not require in-depth discussion of a sensitive topic, there is minimal risk to participants. It is possible you may feel some psychological discomfort in filling out the survey as questions relating to your mental health status will be asked. You have the option to withdraw from completing this survey at any time by selecting the 'Exit' button at the top right-hand side of the survey screen. You may also skip any question you wish not to answer and continue with the remaining questions. However, as you will not be identifiable in the survey results, the investigators will not be able to remove any information provided after the survey is closed. Should you continue to feel discomfort, please contact your local health care services for support.

Please note that the online survey tool used in the study, SurveyMonkey, is hosted by a server located in the USA. The US Patriot Act permits U.S. law enforcement officials, for the specific purpose of anti-terrorism investigations, to seek a court order that allows access to the personal records of any person without the person's knowledge. In view of this we cannot absolutely guarantee the full confidentiality and anonymity of your data. With your consent to participate in this study, you acknowledge this.

**Contact:** Should you have any questions regarding the study itself, please contact Stephanie Mullen-Kavanagh, Executive Director, CDAA at [skavanagh@cdaa.ca](mailto:skavanagh@cdaa.ca).

By participating in this survey, it is assumed you fully understand the study and consent to participate. While your identity will remain anonymous throughout the data collected in this project, it is assumed you consent to the use of your responses in this study.

Your colleagues in oral health and overall health, on behalf of the CDAA Board of Directors,

Dianne Hennig, OSTJ RDA MFR  
President  
CDAA

Stephanie Mullen-Kavanagh  
Executive Director  
CDAA

Suite 200, 440 Laurier Avenue West,  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X6  
[skavanagh@cdaa.ca](mailto:skavanagh@cdaa.ca)  
613-521-5495