



Work engagement among Dutch dental hygienists

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The aim of the study

To investigate the level of work engagement among Dutch dental hygienists (NVM-members).

Methods

Members of the Dutch Dental Hygienists' Association (Nederlandse Vereniging van Mondhygiënisten; NVM) completed a questionnaire, including the short form Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006): a hypothesized three-factor structure of work engagement (Vigor, Dedication and Absorption). Statements about how one feels at work were answered on 7-point rating scales (0 = never to 6 = always).

Results

	Dental Hygienists (N=490)		Manual (N=9679)		Dentists [^] (N=491)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
UBES-9*	4.77	0.90	3.74	1.17	---	---
Vigor*#	4.74	0.94	4.01	1.14	3.95	1.13
Dedication*#	5.08	0.89	3.88	1.38	4.32	1.09
Absorption*#	4.48	1.12	3.35	1.32	3.86	1.09

[^]UWES-15 *Significant differences with manual norms ($p < 0.01$) #Significant differences with Dutch dentists ($p < 0.01$) (Te Brake et al., 2007)

Conclusions

Dutch dental hygienists reported a (very) high level of work engagement. A lot of dental hygienists experienced at least once a week to daily a high level of well-being at their work. On work engagement and on the three dimensions, dental hygienists reported not only higher mean scores compared with the manual norms, based upon a variety of professions, but also in comparison with the mean scores among Dutch dentists.



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Background and Method

- The Dutch government has focused on reallocation within the field of oral health care ⁽¹⁾
 - DH's were required to take responsibility for low risk patients
with stable oral health; *focus on prevention/promotion*
“from cure to care and the importance of oral health in relation to general health”
- Several studies about job satisfaction, no recent data available about work engagement
- Work engagement: *‘Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption’* ⁽²⁾
- Determination of level of work engagement of DH's provides insights on 3 dimensions and indicates the well-being at work
 - Use of the short form **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9)** ⁽³⁾

¹Jongbloed-Zoet C, Bol-van den Hil EM, La Rivière-Ilsen J, Sanden-Stoelinga van der MSE. Dental hygienists in the Netherlands: the past, present and future. *Int J Dent Hygiene* 2012;10:148-154

²Schaufeli WB, Salanova M, Gonzalez-Roma V, Bakker, AB. The measurement of engagement and burnout and: A confirmative analytic approach. *J Happiness Stud* 2002a;3:71-92

³Schaufeli WB, Bakker AB, Salanova M. The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educ Psychol Meas* 2006;66:701-716



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Conclusion and Discussion

- DH's reported a (very) high level of work engagement

"they have a lot of energy, are very enthusiastic about their jobs and they get absorbed by their work"

- On the 3 dimensions, DH's reported higher mean scores compared with
other professions ⁽³⁾ and Dutch dentists ⁽⁴⁾

- Further research in other countries is essential ⁽⁵⁾

- An explanation could be the phenomenon designated as 'relative deprivation'⁽⁶⁾:

subjective job dissatisfaction, not caused by an objective work situation, but caused by the relative position as compared to the work situation of another, e.g., dentists...

³Schaufeli WB, Bakker AB, Salanova M. The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educ Psychol Meas* 2006;66:701-716

⁴Te Brake JHM, Bouman A-M, Gorter R, Hoogstraten J, Eijkman M. Professional burnout and work engagement among dentists. *Euro J Oral Sciences* 2007;115:180-18

⁵Singh PK. Job satisfaction among dental therapists in South Africa. *J Public Health Dent* 2012 Aug 8. doi: 10.1111/j.1752-7325.2012.00363.x

⁶Buunk AP, Zurriaga R, Gonzales-Roma V, Subirats M. Engaging in up-wards and down-wards comparison as a determinant of relative deprivation at work: A longitudinal study. *J Vocat Behav* 2003;62:370-88