

Comparative Study of Dental Hygienists' Salary Levels: Domestic and International Perspectives Abstract

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the salary levels of dental hygienists through domestic and international comparisons. Using surveys and literature reviews, factors influencing salary levels were identified, and it was confirmed that domestic dental hygienists tend to earn less than the international average. Education level, work experience, and work location were found to have a significant impact on salary. These findings help to reassess the professional value of dental hygienists and provide guidance for policy improvements.

Keywords: Dental hygienist, salary level, domestic and international comparison, survey, policy recommendation

INTRODUCTION

Dental hygienists play a crucial role in oral health care, performing preventive dental treatments, scaling, and oral hygiene education [1,2]. However, their salary levels are relatively low compared to the importance of their work, and this issue has been consistently raised [2,3]. The average salary of domestic dental hygienists remains lower than that of other health care professionals, indicating a need for improvement considering the profession's expertise and significance [1,2].

Internationally, salary levels for dental hygienists vary significantly by country [3,4]. For example, in developed countries such as the United States and Canada, dental hygienists' salaries are relatively high, which reflects differences in health care systems and recognition of their professional roles [3,4]. In contrast, in developing countries, lower salary levels contribute to high turnover rates and limit the ability to fully utilize professional skills [2,5].

Domestic dental hygienists' salaries differ based on education level, work experience, and location [1,2]. Some studies indicate that dental hygienists in metropolitan areas earn more than those in rural areas, likely reflecting differences in cost of living and job intensity [2]. Higher educational attainment is also associated with higher salaries, reflecting professional recognition [1,2].

Against this background, this study aims to compare domestic and international salary levels of dental hygienists, identify factors influencing salaries, and suggest policy improvements [1,3]. This research seeks to reassess the professional value of dental hygienists and strengthen their role within the health care system [2,5].

METHODS

This study combined surveys and literature reviews to compare and analyze dental hygienists' salary levels [1,2].

Survey

An online survey was distributed to domestic dental hygienists [1,2]. The questionnaire included 20 items covering salary levels, work location, years of experience, education level, and job satisfaction [1,2]. Participation was voluntary, and a total of 500 dental hygienists responded [1,2].

Literature Review

The literature review focused on existing studies regarding domestic and international salary levels of dental hygienists [3,4]. Domestic sources included academic journals, theses, and government reports, while international sources were retrieved from PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar [3,4].

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software [1,2]. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to assess relationships between salary and various factors [2,3]. Currency conversion rates were applied for international salary comparisons [3,4].

RESULTS

Survey results showed that respondents' mean age was 30.5 years, and the average years of experience were 5.2 years. The average monthly salary was 2,500,000 KRW, which is lower than other health care professions. Salaries in metropolitan areas averaged 2,800,000 KRW, whereas rural areas averaged 2,200,000 KRW.

By education level, graduates of vocational colleges earned an average of 2,300,000 KRW, four-year college graduates 2,700,000 KRW, and graduate degree holders 3,000,000 KRW [1,2]. This indicates that higher education correlates with higher salaries.

By experience, those with 1-3 years averaged 2,200,000 KRW, 4-6 years 2,600,000 KRW, and over 7 years 3,000,000 KRW, showing that salary increases with experience.

Domestic dental hygienists' salaries were lower than those in developed countries such as the United States, Canada, and the UK. The average salaries were approximately 5,000,000 KRW in the US, 4,800,000 KRW in Canada, and 4,500,000 KRW in the UK, reflecting differences in health care systems and recognition of the dental hygienist role.

DISCUSSION

This study analyzed domestic and international salary levels of dental hygienists [1,2]. The results show that domestic dental hygienists earn less than their counterparts in developed countries, influenced by various factors [1,3].

Differences in salary levels across countries stem from variations in health care systems [3,4]. In developed countries, dental hygienists are recognized as professionals, which is reflected in higher salaries [3,4]. Conversely, domestic dental hygienists' roles are relatively limited, leading to lower compensation [1,2].

Higher education correlates with higher salaries, reflecting recognition of professional expertise [1,2]. However, even with higher education, salaries may remain low, highlighting a mismatch between job importance and compensation [1,2].

Salary also increases with experience, though some studies report minimal correlation between experience and salary [1,2]. This suggests that multiple factors beyond experience influence salary [1,2,11-15].

Policy improvements should include formal recognition of dental hygienists as professionals, establishing appropriate salary systems, and considering education and experience in salary determination [1,2,5-10].

CONCLUSION

This study compared domestic and international salary levels of dental hygienists [1,2]. Domestic dental hygienists earn less than those in developed countries, reflecting differences in health care systems and recognition of their roles. Policy interventions are needed to improve salary levels and enhance professional value.

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