



PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Clinical Specialty
Secondary Division



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Career Summary

Pediatric dentists play a big part in healthcare for children. They are recognized as both a primary care and specialty care providers. Specializing in preventative and therapeutic oral health care for infants through adolescence, including those with special needs, pediatric dentists are some of the most important medical professionals in families' lives. Some of the treatments pediatric dentists provide include oral health exams to check for caries or cavities and assess teeth growth. They also instruct children and their families on proper oral hygiene and preventing cavities (Chairside Guide, 2019).

Job Duties:

Pediatric dentists focus on the prevention of cavities and the overall oral health of children. Some duties include:

- Conduct exams to check children's dental health and development
- Inform families on tooth decay prevention
- Diagnose and treat diseases of the gum and teeth
- Take x-rays of teeth and observe their condition for possible treatment
- Place appropriate dental appliances such as bridges or dentures to treat deciduous (primary) and secondary teeth
- Take dental impressions for crowns or implants (Dofka, 2013))
- Deliver quality, safe dental care for children and promote oral health and positive outlook on dental care (Nowak, 2019)

Employment Characteristics:

There are many characteristics that will help pediatric dentists carry out their practice. These are listed below:

- Great at managing kids, keeping them calm and cooperative
- Good communication skills, to communicate with parents and other staff
- Leadership skills to lead the clinic
- Friendly and caring personality
- Ability to treat all patients well, including ones with special needs
- Behavior management, building a relationship with the patient and their family

And most importantly, a medical degree and two to three years of specialty training after dental school (Dofka, 2013).

Education and Training:

A pediatric dentist would need a high school diploma, a bachelor's degree with pre-dental study, a DDS (Doctor of Dental surgery) and DMD (Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry) from an accredited dental school. Usually, at least three years of undergraduate education and an addition of four years of dental school is needed to become a general dentist (DDS/DMD, 2020). Once they have graduated dental school, they can attend a two-year pediatric dentistry residency program. After their training, they have to pass a national written exam and a state clinical licensing exam before they can practice (Residency Programs, 2020). Finally, to become a pediatric dentist, an addition of two or three years of specialty training is required.

Credentialing Professional Association

Doctor of Dental surgery and Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry are considered equal in qualification. The American Board of Pediatric Dentistry is the only certifying board for pediatric dentistry that is recognized by the American Dental Association. To become certified, the pediatric dentist has to complete a graduate program that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation that is in the specialty of pediatric dentistry. Once they have graduated, they are eligible to be certified by going through the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry's examination process. This examination process includes a written Qualifying Examination and an Oral Clinical Examination which will allow them to demonstrate their knowledge as a pediatric dentist. Once they are certified, they must renew their certification annually (American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, 2020).

Career-related Data and Statistics

When considering the supply of pediatric dentists in the United States, the number of pediatric dentists per capita was 2.2 per 100,000 population. This was the highest and is predicted to grow at a subtle yet steady rate. The number of patients in 2016 when compared with 2015 has increased by 51.3% for pediatric dentists, which is the highest compared to other dental specialty (Gupta N, 2017). This is a promising statistic as it shows the need for more pediatric dentists can become more demanding.

The average net income for pediatric dentists nationwide as of 2020 is \$239,550. In Sammamish, Washington, my home town, the average net income is a higher amount of \$254,757 (Pediatric Dentist Annual Salary, 2020). When observing the average growth rate of dentists in general, there is a 7% growth rate which is 2% faster than average (Dentists: Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2019). With a higher growth rate, this dental specialty could become competitive in the future, but it still looks positive for those intending to become pediatric dentists in the future.

Personal Interview

When did you decide you wanted to become a dentist and why?

When I first came to the United States, I saw many great dentists in Seattle who treated my family very well. I soon realized that, I wanted to help people when I grow up. Dentistry was the way to go for me since I couldn't bear to see patients pass away.

What is the most rewarding part of being a pediatric dentist?

I love kids. I love my job because I get to help kids get out of pain in a fear-free atmosphere. I also get to do what I love to do: helping people.

What is the most challenging part of being a dentist?

One of the most challenging part of being a dentist are parents, surprisingly. Some parents set limitations and boundaries for treatment and this prevents us from providing the best care for their children.

What is one thing you realized after becoming a pediatric dentist?

I realized that it is hard to control the prevention of tooth decay as a dentist. Tooth decay can be prevented but it is so challenging since daily care is key to preventing it. Since I do not see my patients everyday nor do I know what their daily lives are like, I can't be there for them to remind them to brush their teeth or floss.

What would you tell someone who is considering a career in dentistry?

It's a great career because you get to help people to have optimal oral health and even overall health. It's more of a curative field too so I don't have to go through the process of doing bloodwork and possible finding the cause and the cure.

How do you stay positive and motivated during difficult times in your practice?

I love my job so much and I feel so lucky to have this job as a pediatric dentist. I feel very thankful for being able to help kids as my job. As a second generation immigrant, I feel especially blessed to be able to have such a great job.

Is there anything else you would like to speak on for your medical profession?

I just feel like I am one of the luckiest people to do what I do now because there are so many new ways to take care of kids' teeth due to safer technology to treat cavities. I am excited to see where the technological developments will lead us.

Work-based Summary

I shadowed Dr. Rama at Woodinville Pediatric Dentistry for a total of 9 hours on January 20th and January 27th. Throughout the whole experience, I observed Dr. Rama giving various types of treatments such as treating carious lesions (tooth decay). From observing Rama, I have gained perspective about what a day in the life of a pediatric dentist is like. Rama treats every one of her patients like family and I realize that it is important to be able to connect well with patients. She helps make each child feel comfortable and safe, making their dental visits pain-free and pleasant.

One specific skill I learned was applying silver diamine fluoride (SDF). SDF is used for primary prevention on high risk carious lesions sites. It provides antimicrobial biofilm resistance which means that it stops the process of tooth decay. SDF is beneficial for young children because it is a less invasive approach than traditional methods that may require general anesthesia which has higher risks, especially for young children. When SDF is applied, the cavities will darken permanently which means it is stopping the decay (Chairside Guide, 2019). It is interesting to learn that there are alternative methods to treating tooth decay and that fillings or extractions are not the only solutions.

What I learned:

- checking the patient's bite
- check spacing and alignment to predict future growth conditions
- determine whether or not the patient needs to be referred to an orthodontist
- check for cavities and carious lesions and treat them
- treat patients and their family with a warm and friendly attitude
- check tonsils, bigger tonsils cause mouth breathing which leads to possible cavities
- check tooth sensitivity and root inflammation
- make a mouth impression and night guard for a tooth grinder
- discuss treatment options for patients with their parents
- communicate efficiently with other staff

After my job shadow experience with Dr. Rama, I realize how much of an impact pediatric dentists can make for each family. The parents are always grateful for Dr. Rama taking such good care of them and it is very rewarding to see the children smiling after their check-up. I love working with kids and it was amazing to interact with kids of all ages and their families. I feel inspired to further my passion in medicine. I hope to be able to help people one day and brighten their days, just like Dr. Rama.

January 29, 2020



To Whom It May Concern:

It is my great pleasure to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Sandy Huang. She is competing in the Washington HOSA this year and is interested in pursuing a career in health care. Sandy wrote me a very detailed and organized email asking me to mentor her for this project. I was very impressed with her presentation and writing skills.

She came to my office on time, dressed professionally, and was a quiet observer always respecting patient confidentiality and privacy. She followed me around my clinic wearing appropriate clinic attire and took notes when I was talking to my patients. Sandy was always respectful of my time and my patients' privacy, if she had questions, she would always wait to ask them at appropriate times.

I have known Sandy for 13 years and witnessed this young lady grow into a very mature and hard-working individual. I am truly impressed with her organization skills and her maturity level. Sandy approached me about teaching her about the application of Silver Diamine Fluoride after she watched me apply it on a patient. She chose to demonstrate the application of Silver Diamine Fluoride, a treatment that has help many providers arrest tooth decay in patients who could not others tolerate dental treatment with traditional methods.

Sandy is a natural leader who is very quiet and insightful. She has a smile for everyone and strives to be a positive influence in every situation. Her family moved to America from Taiwan, where she learned the importance of an education and hard work as she witnessed her family find success by finishing graduate school and securing careers where they were able to provide for their families.

Sandy is a true gem and one of a kind. I have been working with high school and college-age youth for the last 15 years and have not met anyone like Sandy.

Sandy's endless curiosity, combined with her passion for education, leads me to believe there will be no limit to her growth and achievements in college and beyond.

Sincerely,

Rama Oskouian, DMD, MPH

Clinical Specialty

SKILL CHECKLIST TEMPLATE

Competitor #: _____ Judge's Signature: _____

Reference: Title: Pediatric Dentistry 2017

Author Crystal YO, et al.

Copyright 2017 Page numbers E142

Skill: Silver Diamine Fluoride for Dental Caries Management in Children	Judge Comments
1. Go over the consent form with the patient's parent or legal guardian and have them sign it. Make sure that they fully understand the procedure and the possible side effects.	
2. Set up work station: Vaseline, cotton swab, one drop of silver diamine fluoride 38% in a tray, a microbrush, 2 cotton rolls	
3. Place bib on patient and give them protective eye wear. Wear standard PPE (personal protective equipment). This includes gloves and protective face mask and eye-wear.	
4. Use a cotton swab to apply petroleum jelly to the lips to prevent staining during the treatment process	
5. Isolate the tongue and cheek from the affected teeth with cotton rolls.	
6. Make sure the teeth are clean and free of gross debris and use an air compressor to dry the lesion.	

7. Apply SDF to the affected tooth surface with a microbrush, use no more than one drop of SDF throughout the entire treatment.	
8. Wait at least one minute to allow the SDF to dry.	
9. Remove cotton rolls.	
10. Use a saliva ejector tip to remove excess saliva.	
11. Follow up with the patient and their parents about post-treatment care	

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