Does education in Special Care Dentistry increase people’s confidence to manage the care of a more diverse population?

**ABSTRACT**

Education in Special Care Dentistry (SCD) at undergraduate and postgraduate level is often limited when compared with other dental specialities, even though dental professionals encounter people with Special Healthcare Needs (SHCNs) on a regular basis. This literature review examined whether education at undergraduate and postgraduate level increases dental students and professionals’ confidence to manage a patient with SHCN. It also appraised whether there was a correlation between increased confidence and increased quality of care for people with SHCN. It examined educational efforts worldwide, and whether there is an increased emphasis on providing education in SCD to dental students.

It was found that those who received high quality practical and theoretical education on how to manage patients with SHCN reported having higher levels of confidence than those who don’t. People also reported being far more likely to employ the proper behaviour management techniques and were more likely to treat people with SHCN regularly. There are a multitude of educational efforts in SCD worldwide which are gaining more traction but many barriers to education still exist.