

12<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress on Dentistry and Dental Medicine  
6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Dentistry and Oral Health

April 28, 2023 | Webinar

## **Dental therapists recognition to the health care team to improve access to oral health care in Cameroon**

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**O**ral Health in Cameroon: A Report of the Surgeon General, and the subsequent National Call to Action to Promote Oral Health, contributed significantly to raising awareness regarding the lack of access to oral health care by many Cameroonians, especially minority and low-income populations, with resulting disparities in oral health. The problem is particularly acute among the rural and poor communities. The current dental workforce in the Cameroonian is inadequate to meet the oral health care needs for the population. It is inadequate in terms of numbers of dentists, as well as their geographic distribution, ethnicity, education, and practice orientation. Dental therapists, paraprofessionals trained in a 3 to 4 academic-years program of postsecondary education, have been

employed internationally to improve access to oral health care for population. Research has documented that utilizing dental therapists is a cost-effective method of providing quality oral health care in the community. Dental therapists have recently been introduced in Cameroon by the Ministry of Higher Education through Private institution as St Louis University of Health and Biomedical Sciences of Bamenda. Dental therapists could potentially care for children and adult in dental offices, public health clinics, and school systems, as well as in the domain of Sport activities and NGO's. Adding dental therapists to the health care team would be a significant strategy for improving access to care for community and reducing oral health disparities.

**Received date:** April 05, 2023; **Accepted date:** April 07, 2023; **Published Date:** May 24, 2023