

New frontiers in Australian dentistry Dentistry collaborates with Social Work and Community to teach students to recognise, respond and refer in cases of domestic violence.

OVERVIEW & SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTION AND CONTEXT

Domestic violence (DV) is a serious international, national, and local social problem that impacts significantly on public health, with the financial cost of DV in Australia estimated at \$2.2 billion.^{1,2} Dentists are uniquely positioned to identify patients who experience DV because they routinely assess the head and neck, where signs of physical trauma are often visible, and because they frequently encounter common, subtle manifestations of DV such as anxiety, depression and triggered trauma.¹⁻⁶ Due to the individual nature of dental appointments, dentists are also positioned to initiate dialogue in a confidential space, away from a violent partner.³⁻⁵ However, published evidence and feedback from professional peers indicates that little emphasis is placed on DV education for Australian undergraduate dental students. To address this gap, we developed the Dentists and Domestic Violence Recognise, Respond and Refer (Dentists and Domestic Violence Recognise, Respond and Refer) program.

The program was developed by a Senior Lecturer in Dentistry who was required to address the issue and Ms Amanda Lee, CEO of Cairns Regional Health, both her academic skills and her experience in the production of a one-off session for 2015 final-year BDS students using a participatory action research approach.

⁸ (Figure 1) collaborations continued and the DRRR program evolved as outlined briefly below.

2015: Students identified DV as an issue, a one-off session was designed and implemented and a basic evaluation found it valuable.

2016: Another session was designed with additional dentistry content and delivered to assess where sessions worked best in the curriculum. Quantitative and qualitative evaluations showed that 3rd year and continuing to 5th year was best.

2017:

be aware of people and [their] health as a whole not just their teeth and mouth” (Student researcher)¹⁸

