

Dentistry in Sweden



Swedish Dental Association



Contents

Government and healthcare in Sweden	4
Oral healthcare in Sweden	5
Dentistry in Sweden	6
Training and registration	7
Specialists	8
Auxiliaries	9
Working in private practice	9
Working in the Public Dental Service	10
Working in Hospitals	10
Working in Universities and Dental Faculties	11
Dental schools in Sweden	11
Dental associations	12
Publications	13
Employment agencies	13
Some key facts	14
The Swedish Dental Association	15

Government and healthcare in Sweden

Sweden has a population of 8.8 million, with about 85% of inhabitants living in the southern half of the country. It has a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government, but as Head of State the King only has a ceremonial function. A traditional alliance between the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions has had a major influence on national politics. In recent years however, it has become widely accepted that the public sector has grown too large.

Many aspects of government, including healthcare, are delegated to the county or municipality level (288 municipalities). Both the counties and municipalities have elected councils which may levy taxes. Liberal immigration policies have given Sweden a multicultural population, with immigration accounting for 40% of population growth.

Since Sweden has an extensive health system since the 1930s, it is often regarded as having the most advanced welfare state in Europe. Social expenditure accounts for some 40% of Sweden's Gross Domestic Product (1992 data). However, because of declining economic prosperity, the government is beginning to reduce welfare benefits.

In Sweden most healthcare is provided through a national social insurance system, which also provides sick pay, child benefits, disability allowances and pensions. The national insurance system operates as a government agency (the National Social Insurance Board or *Riksförsäkringsverket*), through local Social Insurance Offices (*Försäkringskassor*). Everyone who is resident in Sweden is registered with a social insurance office when they reach the age of 16. The expansion of healthcare in the 1950s and 1960s concentrated especially on secondary care, so that Sweden now has a high proportion of specialist and hospital-based services. Public expectations of health services are typically high. In total, around 90% of healthcare costs are funded by government with a small contribution from local taxes.

Pensions and Healthcare

Sweden has decided to reform the national pension arrangements with a new system replacing the basic and supplementary pensions. The first payment will take place in the year 2001 and the pension will be adjusted to reflect overall resources in the national economy. People born before 1937 will receive a supplementary payment according to the old rules and those born between 1938-1953 will receive part of the pension according to the

new and part according to the old system. Anyone born after 1954 will receive pensions according to the new system only. The new pension system will base payments on lifetime income and individuals will contribute 18.5% of their pay.

For the majority of the Swedish population general health care is paid for through general taxation, plus a small fee (presently SEK 120) for each visit to a doctor. There is also a disability pension (from the *Försäkringskassan*) for those unable to work due to chronic illness or disablement.

Oral healthcare in Sweden

In Sweden oral healthcare is the responsibility of the local government, although municipalities are not required to provide the services themselves. Almost all oral healthcare is provided in one of two ways. Firstly, there is an extensive Public Dental Service (NDS) which provides free dental care to children up to the age of 19. These dental services are mainly delivered in local health centres which are managed by the county councils. In most county councils children and their parents can now choose to attend either the NDS or private practitioners.

Secondly, adults and elderly people who are not entitled to free care from the Public Dental Service can get subsidised dental care from the NDS or dentists in private practice. Traditionally fees and co-payments were controlled by government but price regulations have been removed and costs have started to vary.

Within the above framework

- Basic dental care, such as preventive care, fillings and emergency care is being partially paid for by a fixed subsidy. For persons between the ages of 20 and 29 this covers the initial examination as well.
- There are no subsidies for amalgam fillings.
- For those with long-term illness, certain diseases or special needs, dental care is subsidised with a fixed sum corresponding to 60% of the former fixed fee.
- A new high cost limit for both prosthetic and orthodontic treatment has been introduced.

Dentistry in Sweden

Professional organisations

Approximately 90% of the dentists in Sweden are members of the Swedish Dental Association (SDA). The SDA has close links with other professional associations including the Swedish Association of Private Dental Practitioners and the Swedish Association of Public Dental Officers.

Ethics

Members of the SDA practice within an ethical code which includes relationships and behaviour between dentists, contracts with patients, resuscitation and advertising. This code is administered by the Swedish Dental Association. Advertising is further regulated by law. A dentist cannot compare him/herself with other dentists nor say he/she is better than somebody else. When advertising, only basic information can be given. Advertising should be “reliable, impartial and accurate“.

There is also a Dental Act which states that all Swedish citizens are entitled to good quality dental care.

As far as the relationship of the dentists with their employees and with other dentists is concerned, there are no specific contractual requirements between practitioners working in the same practice; however a dentist’s employees are protected by the national and European laws on equal employment opportunities, maternity benefits, occupational health, minimum vacations and health and safety.

Standards and monitoring

The standards of dental care are monitored by the Regional Departments of the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) and also, the quantity of treatments performed by each dentist is measured by the *Försäkringskassan* (the Social Insurance Office). Dentists who produce significantly more or less than the national average may be required to submit their treatment records to ensure that patients’ accounts have been prepared correctly. To complement the above, the Swedish Dental Association has produced a manual of quality assurance which is currently being implemented. The only other control on the quality of care is through patient complaints. If a patient complains, and the dentist cannot resolve the matter directly, there are two disciplinary processes through which the issues may

be considered. In private practice, the Local Dental and Governmental Disciplinary Committees are used. In the Public Dental Service an Internal Disciplinary Board substitutes for the first two of these organisations. The Governmental Disciplinary Committee is the senior committee for resolving complaints and very few cases proceed further.

Insurance and professional indemnity

Liability insurance is compulsory for dentists. For dentists working in the Public Dental Service there is a national scheme. Insurance for private practitioners is provided by The Swedish Association of Private Dental Practitioners. The latter provides financial support for the cost of further medical and dental treatment, compensation for loss of income, damages for pain and suffering, physical disability and injury and other inconveniences. A private dental practitioner currently pays approximately SEK 1 550 (1997) each year for this cover.

Training and registration

In order to practise as a dentist in Sweden, a qualified dentist must have a licence awarded by the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*). This body keeps a register of dentists.

If you want to register in order to work as a dentist in Sweden, contact:

Socialstyrelsen, Division for Qualifications and Training, SE-106 30 Stockholm. Tel: (46) 8 555 530 00, fax: (46) 8 555 534 20.

Primary dental qualification

The main degrees which may be included in the register are: the *licence*, and a *diploma* of specialisation. There is a fee of SEK 415 to receive the licence.

The licenced Swedish dentist is called "*Legitimerad tandläkare*" (*tandläkare=dentist*).

The Social Insurance Office (*Försäkringskassan*) also keeps a register of practitioners who are affiliated to the national social insurance scheme, and dentists must be on this register before they can claim social insurance subsidies. Registering for affiliation with the national social insurance scheme only requires the production of a recognised degree certificate or diploma.

Dentists numbers

Approximately 170 dentists graduate each year. There are 6 094 male and 4 806 female dentists under the age of 65 (retirement age) in Sweden although how many of these are active is unknown.

Funding

New graduates earn between SEK 20 000–25 000 and specialists and heads of clinics earn between SEK 25 000–38 000. In 1997 the total cost for dental care was approximately SEK 12 million. Of this SEK 2 million was provided through the national insurance scheme (estimated at SEK 1.6 million in 1998). Sixty-five percent of the SEK 2 million went to private practice and thirty-five percent to the public dental health sector.

Specialists

In Sweden there are approximately 1 200 dentists in eight recognised dental specialties (this works out as a ratio of 1/1000 specialists to other dentists):

- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- Orthodontics
- Paedodontics
- Periodontology
- Endodontics
- Prosthodontics
- Dentomaxillofacial radiology
- Stomatognathic physiology

Patients are referred by a dentist to the specialist. Training for the specialties lasts five years, including two years in general practice. It takes place in university clinics or recognised postgraduate institutions approved by the Swedish Board of National Health and Welfare. Some specialist training is funded by County Councils, who currently provide 47 new places a year. A shortage of specialists in some disciplines is anticipated in the future.

Most specialists work in the Public Dental Service or universities. A small number work in private practice, but most of these are approaching retirement age. There are many associations and societies for specialists: a list of these is available from the Swedish Dental Association.

Auxiliaries

In Sweden there are approximately 2 700 hygienists, 10 000 therapists/dental nurses and 1 800 technicians. These are deployed in the following way:

Hygienists: 600 are employed in private practice and 2 100 in the public dental health sector.

Therapists/dental nurses: 6 100 are employed in private practice and 3 900 in the public dental health sector.

Technicians: 200 are in public dental health sector, 15-20 at dental schools and the rest employed in the private sector.

Dental hygienists

The hygienist can either have a registrable qualification or be licenced. The licenced hygienist may work independently (the licence is awarded by the National Board of Health and Welfare).

However, most dental hygienists work in locations where dentists work.

Orthodontic auxiliaries

Orthodontic operating auxiliaries must work under the direction of an orthodontist. Their training lasts one year and enables them to carry out basic examinations and simple procedures.

Working in private practice

In Sweden, dentists who practice on their own or as small groups, outside hospitals or schools, and who provide a broad range of general treatments are said to be in *private practice*. There are about 3 800 dentists who work in this way. This represents 45% of all dentists registered and practising in Sweden. In Sweden the term 'general practice' refers to dental practitioners who are not specialists and who work outside hospitals.

Dentists in private practice are self-employed and are remunerated mainly by charging fees for treatments, supplemented by social security subsidies. Very few dentists (less than 1%) accept only private fee-paying patients. Some dentists work in a 'lease arrangement' renting a room, equipment and sometimes staff from the dentist-owner. Such dentists have their own patients and pay either a monthly rent or a percentage of their income.

Joining or establishing a practice

There are no rules which limit the number of dentists or other staff who may work in a single practice. Most newly qualifying dentists who enter practice do so as associates in a group practice. There is no state assistance for establishing a new practice and generally practitioners take out commercial loans from a bank.

No standard contractual arrangements are prescribed for dental practitioners working in the same practice. They may be employees of a principal dentist, in partnership or employed under a lease arrangement.

Working in the Public Dental Service

There is a public dental service which provides free services to children (up to 19 years of age). Apart from children, the service also provides dental care for adults as stated earlier. The Public Dental Service is funded by county councils. It broadly provides the same types of treatment for which national insurance subsidies are available. For adults the same system of national insurance reimbursements and fee-scales apply as in private practice.

The service employs about 4 500 dentists, approximately 1 100 as specialists, although the size of the service is decreasing. The only formal qualifications required to work in the public dental service are for specialists, who should have received recognised additional specialist training.

The monitoring of dentists in the Public Dental Service is the same as that for dentists in private practice, except where services are provided free of charge.

Working in Hospitals

In Sweden dentists work in hospitals as salaried employees of the county councils, or one of the private health companies which owns some hospitals. There are usually no restrictions on seeing patients outside

the hospital. Dentists working in hospitals are employed either as specialists, or as *hospital dentists* who provide conventional dental treatment. For the latter, no formal postgraduate training is required. Promotion to higher grades is achieved through training programmes and external examinations.

Any complaints are initially handled internally by hospital disciplinary boards.

Working in Universities and Dental Faculties

In Sweden about 350 dentists work in universities and dental faculties, as employees of the university. They are allowed to combine their work in the dental faculty with part-time employment elsewhere and, with the permission of the university, may work in private practice outside the faculty. Academic titles within a Swedish dental faculty are: *professor* (responsible for education and research), *associate professor* (teaching), and *assistant professor* (teaching). There are no formal age or training requirements, but most promotions are made on the basis of scientific research experience.

The time of a typical full-time faculty member of staff is spent 50% on teaching, 30% on their own patients, 10% administration and 10% research.

Dental Schools in Sweden

Faculty of Odontology, University of Gothenburg

P.O.B 450, SE-405 30 Göteborg

Tel: (46) 31 773 30 00

Fax: (46) 31 773 31 93

E-mail: info@gu.se

Website: www.odontologi.gu.se

Institute of Odontology at the Karolinska Institute

P.O.B 4064, SE-141 04 Huddinge

Tel: (46) 8 728 80 50

Fax: (46) 8 746 79 48

E-mail: info@ofa.ki.se

Website: www.ki.se/odont/

Faculty of Odontology, University of Umeå
SE-901 87 Umeå
Tel: (46) 90 785 60 00
Fax: (46) 90 77 05 80
E-mail: umea.universitet@adm.umu.se
Website: www.umu.se/medfak/

Faculty of Odontology, Lund University
Carl Gustafs väg 34, SE-214 21 Malmö
Tel: (46) 40 32 20 00
Fax: (46) 40 92 53 59
E-mail: ODKansli@od.mah.se
Website: www.od.mah.se/

National dental association

Swedish Dental Association (SDA)
Sveriges Tandläkarförbund (STF)
P.O.B 5843, SE-102 48 Stockholm
Tel: (46) 8 666 15 00
Fax: (46) 8 662 58 42
E-mail: info@tandlakarforbundet.se
Website: www.tandlakarforbundet.se

Other dental associations:

The Swedish Association of Private Dental Practitioners
Sveriges Privattandläkarförening

P.O.B 5843, SE-102 48 Stockholm
Tel: (46) 8 555 44 600
Fax: (46) 8 555 44 666
E-mail: info@ptl.se
Website: www.ptl.se

The Swedish Association of Public Dental Officers
STF/Tjänstetandläkarföreningen
P.O.B 5843, SE-102 48 Stockholm
Tel: (46) 8 666 15 55
Fax: (46) 8 660 34 34
E-mail: bjorn@stf-tt.org
Website: www.stf-tt.org

The Swedish Association of Odontological Teachers
STF/Läraryrket
P.O.B 5843, SE-102 48 Stockholm

The Swedish Association of Dental Students
STF/Studerandeföreningen
P.O.B 5843, SE-102 48 Stockholm

Publications

Tandläkartidningen
(Journal of the Swedish Dental Association)
P.O.B. 5843
SE-102 48 Stockholm
Tel: (46) 8 666 15 00
Fax: (46) 8 662 58 42
E-mail: redaktionen.tlt@tandlakarforbundet.se

Swedish Dental Journal
(the scientific journal of the SDA)
P.O.B. 5843
SE-102 48 Stockholm
Tel: (46) 8 666 15 00
Fax: (46) 8 662 58 42

Employment agencies

Local employment agencies hold information regarding vacancies for dentists. The Euroadvisers in the Swedish employment agencies are part of the European employment services, EURES.

Some key facts

In EU/EC since...	1995
Population (1996)	8.85 million (1998)
Main language	Swedish
GDP/capita (estimated Purchasing Power Standard ¹)	15 590 (PPS 1993)
European Economic Area, GDP/capita (estimated)	22 803 (PPS 1998)
Civilian employment in	
(1994)	
Agriculture	4%
Industry	25%
Services	71%
No. of dentists working in different settings:	
Private practice	3 800
University	350
Public Dental Service (including 200 in hospitals)	4 500
TOTAL	8 650
Age of children (for receipt of dental care)	Up to and including the calendar year in which they become 19
Population (1997)	8.85 million
Population growth rate (1996)	0.04% (1995)
% GDP spent on healthcare	7.5% (1995)
% of total household consumption (per inhabitant) spent on medical and health expenses	2.5% (1991)
% of health care expenditure on dental services	9% (1995)
	105 when housing costs are excluded

¹ Purchasing Power Standard is a unit which cancels out differences in domestic price levels and can therefore be used to make comparisons in real terms. Source: Eurostat (1995).

***From the EU Manual of Dental Practice 2000.
Published by the Dental Liaison Committee in the EU.***



The Swedish Dental Association – Sveriges Tandläkarförbund

Established in 1908, the Swedish Dental Association (SDA) currently has some 11 500 members, of whom some 5 200 practice in the Public Dental Service and 5 000 are private practitioners. Approximately 350 teachers at the four dental faculties and 500 dental students are also members.

The number of female members is 40 percent.

The Swedish Dental Association deals with issues affecting the role of dentists in the community, professional ethics, work environment, education and science. Professional skills, a high quality of treatment and patient care are key concepts.

The overall goal of the Swedish Dental Association is to work to promote education, knowledge, quality and expertise among Swedish dentists and Swedish dental healthcare. To achieve this goal, the association has singled out a number of important areas of focus – the following are a few examples:

- Environmental and material issues
- Ethics
- Education
- International issues
- Odontological research and development

The association publishes the journal Tandläkartidningen (The Journal of the SDA) 15 times a year as well as the Swedish Dental Journal. The latter is published in English six times a year and its' goal is to present Swedish odontological research.

The Swedish Dental Association is a member of the World Dental Federation, FDI (Fédération Dentaire Internationale).

Swedish Dental Association

P.O.B. 5843

SE-102 48 Stockholm/Sweden

Tel: (46) 8 666 15 00

Fax: (46) 8 662 58 42

E-mail: info@tandlakarforbundet.se

Website: www.tandlakarforbundet.se



Swedish Dental Association

*P.O.B. 5843, SE-102 48 Stockholm, Sweden · Tel (46) 8 666 15 00 · Fax (46) 8 662 58 42
E-mail: info@tandlakarforbundet.se · Website: www.tandlakarforbundet.se*

March 2000