

# Kenya Medical Training College

## Department of Community Oral Health

### Introduction

Based at Nairobi MTC, the department offers Diploma in Community Oral Health. Community Oral Health Workers (Coho) are based at district and provincial hospitals to give basic dental care to Kenyans. A link to the community and policy makers, Coho submit reports to the decision makers about what is happening at village levels. They are part of the primary health care team that enhances team approach in the overall delivery of health service to the community.

### Brief history

The department was initiated in 1984 through a presidential decree. The few oral health professionals available in the hospitals then could not meet dental needs of Kenyans. The main aim of the programme was, therefore, to train health personnel who provide both preventive and curative services at the community level.

### Course duration

This is a three year programme leading to a diploma in Community oral health.

### Minimum entry requirements

Candidates must meet the following minimum entry requirements for admission.

- An average grade C (Plain) or above. Grade C (Plain) or credit in English and Biology or Biological Sciences.
- C- (Minus) or credit in any two of the following: Chemistry, Physics or Physical Science, Mathematics or General Sciences.

**NB:** These entry requirements will be reviewed from time to time and candidates notified accordingly.

- Candidates must also have sound vision and hearing.

### Programme's overall goals

The goals of the programme are:

- To increase coverage of promotive and preventive services to the majority of the population.
- To prevent any increase in dental diseases.

### Specific objectives

The programmes' objectives are to enable the oral health officers to:

- Do a community diagnosis of oral health problems in their areas of jurisdiction.
- Develop and carry out health education to the community.
- Co-ordinate with the dentist in charge in taking care of the community's oral health needs.
- Participate in relevant health care programmes in the area they are working.
- Provide preventive, curative and rehabilitative dental care.

## What a Coho does

A member of the primary health care team that delivers integrated health care to individuals and communities, Coho's roles and functions will be primarily to undertake promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative activities within the communities. They play a critical role in improving oral health, particularly amongst school age children.

## Specific duties of a Coho

The following are some of the duties of the officers upon graduation:

### Oral health education

- Among other duties, they plan, organize, execute and coordinate oral -health education according to the identified needs of the community.

### School oral health education

To make regular visits to the schools, carry out dental check-ups on school children and give them oral health education.

### Collecting information on community's oral health status

- To carry out surveys within the community to help determine oral health status and report to relevant authorities for necessary action.

### Management and administration of community's oral health

- To order dental materials, simple equipment and instruments for use with the community.

### Clinical oral health services

- To diagnose and treat common dental conditions and refer patients to a dentist as need be.
- To perform minor surgery in emergencies tooth extraction, abscesses and refer patients for more specialized management by a dentist.
- To carry out temporary fillings.
- To perform prophylaxis, scaling and polishing of teeth.
- To place fissure sealants and apply topical fluorides
- To write out prescriptions for analgesics and antimicrobials.

### Evaluation of oral health services

- To submit monthly reports on his work to the officer-in-charge at the district hospital.
- To continuously and innovatively carry out education on a daily basis
- To perform any other duties that may be assigned to him from time to time by the officer-in-charge at the district hospital.

## Social responsibility programmes

The department regularly participates in community dental outreach where free dental treatment is offered to the community.

## Job opportunities

Research institutions; Public, private and mission hospitals; Training institutions;

Non-governmental organisations and  
Pharmaceutical industries.

For further information contact:  
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