

**Table 2** History, training and scope of practice of practice of dental therapists (DT) in **seven** selected countries.  
(Adapted from *Dental therapists: a global perspective* by Nash et al)

	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Malaysia</b>	<b>Tanzania</b>	<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>United States - Alaska</b>
Population	4,028,000	20,155,000	32,268,000	26,127,700	38,200,000	59,800,000	303,824,650
Brief History	Pioneered training 29 School Dental Nurses (now called Dental Therapists) in 1920. By 1970 there were 3 DT schools and over 1300 DTs in School Dental Service for pre- and primary school children, with 95% utilization. Training transferred to dental school in 1999 and was combined in 2007 with dental hygiene in a 3 year program. Now only 660 DTs are registered, almost all in public school clinics for children and adolescents up to age 19. DT's can treat adults with additional training as part of teams in conjunction with dentists. Dental Therapists can practice independently with consultative supervision of a dentist, but very few do. A shortage in the number of Dental Therapists is predicted by the Ministry of Health.	Initiated in 1996 by employment of New Zealand trained DTs in 1966-7. In the states of Tasmania and South Australia established training schools. There are now 7 university schools training DTs. By 1979, 280 DTs graduated annually, currently approximately 200 graduates each year. Although most states permit DTs to work in private dental practices and to treat adults, with prescriptive authority required in two states, the large majority (87%) work in the School Dental Service that provides most of children's dental care. A combined dental therapy/dental hygiene degree in Oral Health Therapy is now offered.	Initiated in 1972, two-thirds of DTs (202) are located in the province of Saskatchewan, with 100 DTs spread across other parts of Canada. Dental Therapists work in government programs, prevention programs in public health, community clinics, training institutions, First Nations organizations and private dental clinics as clinicians, health educators and administrators. Since elimination of the school-based program in 1987, more than half of the DTs in Saskatchewan practice alongside dentists in private practice. Primary orthodontic services may be added to their scope of practice with additional training.	Still called Dental Nurses, the program was started in 1949. Malaysia has trained over 2000 DTs, including students from 19 other countries. All Dental Nurses in Malaysia are females and assigned to the Preschool, Primary and Secondary School Dental Service, providing comprehensive treatment to 90% of children up to age 17. They are not permitted to work in private practice. Most Dental Nurses stay in government service until compulsory retirement at age 55.	In 1955, specially trained dental assistants performed functions similar to current Dental Therapists. The first Dental Therapist training school was established in 1981, a second in 1983, each with 12 students. Although trained to provide more comprehensive treatment, Dental Therapists in Tanzania provide mostly emergency extractions for all ages, due to the extreme shortage of dentists. Other functions include oral health education and ART. Atypically, the ratio of male to female Dental Therapists is 2:1.	Training of Dental Therapists began in 1960 and has since expanded to 15 programs attached to Dental Teaching Hospitals. Dental Care Professionals (DCP) is a recent designation for dental auxiliaries including Dental Therapists, dental hygienists, orthodontic therapists and clinical prosthetists. Most of the training programs now offer a Dental Therapist diploma or a combined dental therapist/dental hygienist B.Sc. in Oral Health Sciences. Dental Therapists are employed in all sectors of dentistry.	Initiated in 2000. First cohorts were trained in New Zealand at Otago University and returned to practice in Alaska. Providers are called Dental Health Aide Therapists (DHAT). First cohorts began practicing in Jan 2004. In addition to formal training DHATs must complete a 400 hr preceptorship. DHAT are certified by a Federal board. Current training is being conducted in Alaska through a partnership between the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and the University of Washington. The program is called DENTEX, and will have its first graduates in December 2008. DHATs practice in rural Alaska and serve Federally recognized Alaska Native beneficiaries.
DTs/Population /Eligibles (Est.)	660 DTs – 1:61,861 1:1288 Eligibles to Age 18	1,236 DTs = 1:16,307 1:4707 Eligibles to Age 18	300 DTs = 1:110,887 1:1000 Eligibles(Saskatch.Age 19)	2090 DTs = 1:12,501 1:4784 Eligibles to Age 17	150 DTs = 1:254,667	691 DTs = 1:86,541	10 DHATs = 1:13,500 135,000 eligible beneficiaries
Dentists/population	1836 Dentists = 1:2194	8,991 Dentists = 1:2242	16,899 Dentists = 1:1909	2,550 Dentists = 1:10,246	110 Dentists = 1:347,273	32,682 Dentists = 1:1830	508 Dentists = 1:1319
DT Training Programs	In Years: 2-diploma, 3-degree No. Graduated/yr: 45 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental School <input type="checkbox"/> In Dental Therapist School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In University Setting	In Years: 3-degree No. Graduated/yr: 200 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental School <input type="checkbox"/> In Dental Therapist School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In University Setting	In Years: 2-diploma No. Graduated/yr: 15-20 <input type="checkbox"/> In Dental School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental Therapist School <input type="checkbox"/> In University Setting	In Years: 3-diploma No. Graduated/yr: 160 <input type="checkbox"/> In Dental School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental Therapist School <input type="checkbox"/> In University Setting	In Years: 3-diploma No. Graduated/yr: 24 <input type="checkbox"/> In Dental School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental Therapist School <input type="checkbox"/> In University Setting	In Years: 2 ¼-diploma, 3-degree No. Graduated/yr: 215 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental Therapist School <input type="checkbox"/> In University Setting	In Years: 2-diploma No. Graduated/yr: 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> In Dental School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Dental Therapist School <input type="checkbox"/> In University Setting
DT Scope of Practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X-rays <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diagnosis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prophylaxis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coronal Scaling <input type="checkbox"/> Root Planing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topical Fluoride <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sealants <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infiltration Anesthesia <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nerve Block Anesthesia <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amalgam filling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Composite filling <input type="checkbox"/> ART <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preformed SS Crown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pulp therapy (deciduous) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extraction (deciduous) <input type="checkbox"/> Extraction (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Orthodontics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adolescents 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