



Unearthing drivers of patient demand and practice productivity

CommBank Health & Australian Dental Association
- Dental Insights Report 2024

Executive Summary



The latest edition of the CommBank Health Insights Report, in partnership with the Australian Dental Association (ADA), reveals that practices are optimistic yet realistic. Concerns about the impact of cost of living pressures on patient demand has emerged as the top issue, while increasing operational expenses and practitioner shortages are constraining profitability and growth.

By examining the impact of changing practice economics and how practices are responding, the report unearths opportunities for practices not only to adapt but improve their performance.



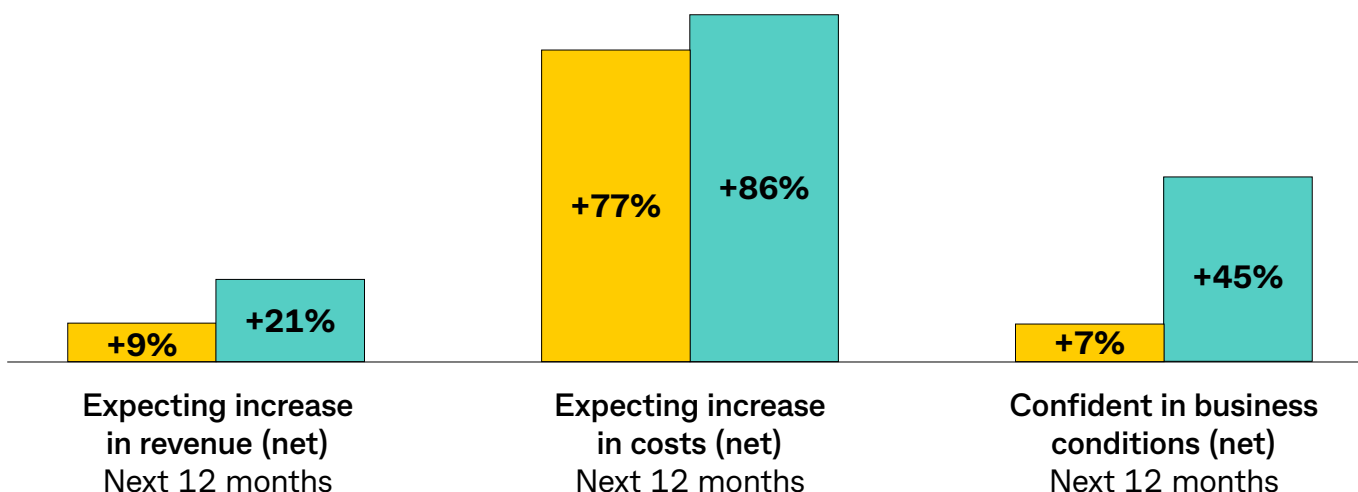
About the research

CommBank Health and the Australian Dental Association jointly developed the research based on the perspectives of 414 practice decision-makers across Australia.

Optimism outshines uncertainty, led by regional practices

Across the dental sector, the outlook for appointment volumes and revenue is mixed. The vast majority expect cost increases, keeping margins under pressure. However, most practices express confidence in future conditions, and one in two are striving for growth. Looking at the difference between practices reveals that those in regional areas are the most confident.

■ Metro ■ Regional



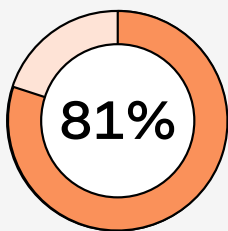
Facing sector challenges head-on

Dental practices are concerned about the impact of cost of living pressures and economic uncertainty on patient appointment volumes. Rising fixed costs and increased cost of payroll round out the top three challenges. That's prompting a focus on strategies to acquire new patients, drive efficiencies and reducing costs or debt.

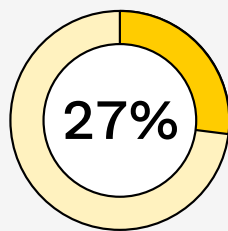
Top challenges	Top business priorities	Top tactics
78% cost of living and economic uncertainty impacting patient demand	70% are prioritising at least one initiative to acquire new patients	33% investing in sales and marketing approaches
64% increasing costs of payroll	52% are prioritising at least one initiative to drive efficiencies	33% adapting systems and processes to drive efficiency and productivity
63% increasing fixed overheads	47% are prioritising at least one initiative to attract and retain staff	33% restructuring operational costs or reducing debt

Lifting patient engagement and convenience

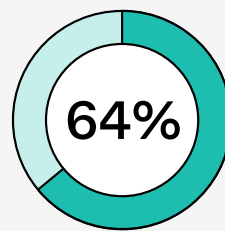
Practices are implementing different initiatives to attract patients and enhance their experience. This includes a range of digital and non-digital marketing initiatives. Many are also diversifying their services offering, adjusting opening hours and offering payment plans.



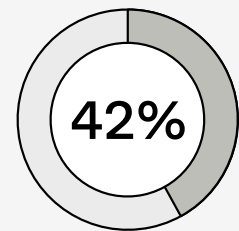
81% of practices have a marketing budget



27% are planning to offer new services in next two years



64% offer appointments after 5pm



42% offer payment plans or Buy Now Pay Later

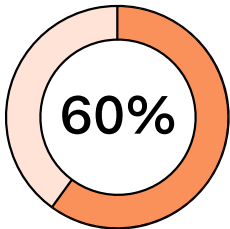


Did you know?

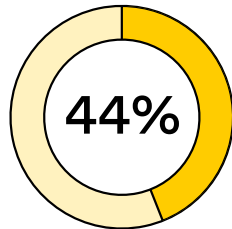
79% of dental practices have treated patients who have presented with complications after receiving treatments overseas. The most common is for crowns, bridges, and implants.

Digital dentistry enters next maturity phase

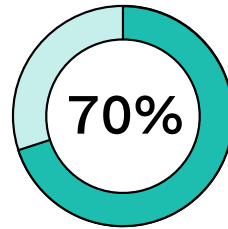
Many practices are prioritising investment in new equipment and devices to improve the quality of care and streamlining systems in search of efficiency gains. Practices are most likely to be investing in clinical technologies, however, many are adopting or interested in digital tools and data-driven technologies that can help improve operational efficiencies and patient interactions.



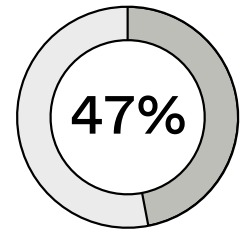
plan to invest in or upgrade at least one clinical technology



plan to invest in or upgrade at least one practice management technology



would like to use AI to enable patient education



would like to use data analytics to conduct external benchmarking

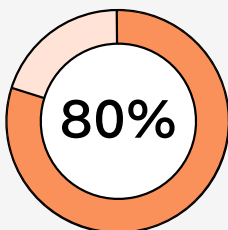


Did you know?

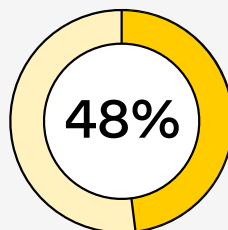
29% of practices report being a victim of a cyber security attack or breach. Malicious behaviour by external hackers is the most widely cited reason.

Attracting and retaining good talent

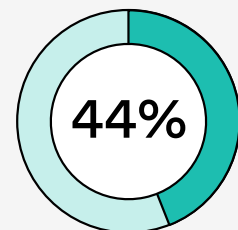
Most practices continue to say that access to skilled staff is restricting their ability to operate at full capacity and grow. This is even higher for regional practices. As a result, practices are undertaking various initiatives to navigate recruitment and retention hurdles, with a focus on workplace culture.



are nurturing a friendly and supportive workplace culture



offer flexible working arrangements



offer higher remuneration packages

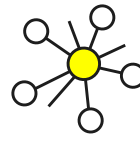
The CommBank & ADA Dental Insights Report explores emerging trends facing dental practices and opportunities to improve operational and financial performance. Read the full report [here](#) to learn more about:



Financial performance outlook and drivers



Top strategies among growth-focused practices



Technology trends and emerging applications



Sustainable dentistry and inclusive oral care

For more information about CommBank Health's specialist teams, solutions for health providers and professionals and industry insights, contact



1800 222 484

or visit



www.commbank.com.au/healthcare

About CommBank & ADA Dental Insights

The 2024 Dental Insights Report is based on a quantitative survey of 414 decision-makers and influencers at dental practices across Australia. The survey examined practices' operational and financial performance, strategic priorities and outlook to inform benchmarking and planning activities among practice decision-makers.

Fifth Quadrant conducted online practice surveys on behalf of CommBank Health and the Australian Dental Association (ADA). The ADA supplied Fifth Quadrant with contact details that enabled it to conduct the research. The study of dental practices was conducted between 27 October 2023 and 17 November 2023. All references to practices in this report refer to those who participated in the survey, unless stated otherwise.

Things you should know: The report has been published for general information purposes only. As this information has been prepared without considering your objectives, financial situation or needs, you should, before acting on this information, consider its appropriateness to your circumstances, if necessary, seek professional advice. The Bank believes that the information in the report is correct and any opinions, conclusions or recommendations are reasonably held or made, based on the information available at the time of its compilation, but no representation or warranty, either expressed or implied, is made or provided as to accuracy, reliability or completeness of any statement made in the report. Any projections and forecasts are based on a number of assumptions and estimates and are subject to contingencies and uncertainties. Different assumptions and estimates could result in materially different results. The report refers to data sourced from an online survey of 414 practices. The survey was undertaken by Fifth Quadrant on behalf of the Commonwealth Bank. All analysis and views of future market conditions are solely those of the Commonwealth Bank.

© 2024 Commonwealth Bank of Australia ABN 48 123 123 124 AFSL and Australian Credit Licence 234945