

MEDICAL AND DENTAL PRACTITIONERS COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE



Policy on Age Restriction in the Practice of Medicine and Dentistry

Background

The first duty of a doctor is to make the care of the patient his first concern. Patients expect quality of care from their attending doctors, and this quality may be compromised by the decline of cognitive and physical ability of the aged medical/dental practitioner. The issue of when to retire has become a topical issue within the International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA). This is due to the fact that increasing medical services to the public requires more doctors available for their care. It would appear the decision to retire should be made by the individual practitioner based on his/her health issues, emotional or physical burn out and the desire to spend more time with their families. Given the prevailing socio-economic environment, retirement might be a challenge for the local practitioners; hence this policy is intended to guide practitioners on the issue of retirement from practice.

Introduction

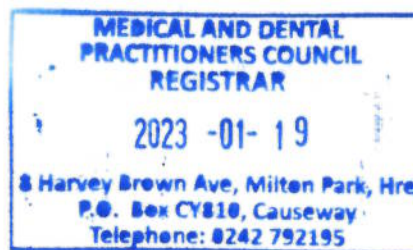
Whilst the doctor has a right to practise his/her profession, ethically and professionally, the individual doctor is compelled to consider whether they are still competent, and the duties or procedures they should consider stopping at a certain age, such as teaching, or surgical operations. They should also consider whether they are still productive, i.e., are they still providing good health care to their patients, do they have any physical challenges that might affect their practice? Answers to these questions will honestly advise the practitioner when to stop or tailor his practice with age. Furthermore, Council has received complaints from patients over the clinical decisions of senior medical practitioners. Some of these complaints have been directly associated with age related medical conditions of our colleagues, and have led to disciplinary inquiries. It is against this background that Council conducted a survey in 2013 to members of the profession. Responses were received from practitioners whose medical experience ranged from 5 to over 50 years. Whilst the Policy below was formulated as a result of the responses received from practitioners of all ages. The amendments have been based on the experiences of Quebec Regulatory Authority as well as the Medical Council of New Zealand.

Policy: A practitioner can continue to practice under the following conditions if s/he:-

- 1. After 75 years produces an annual medical examination report upon renewal of license to practice**
- 2. Fulfills the requirements for Continuous Professional Development**
- 3. Pays of the applicable fees**

4. The doctors should maintain personal development plans .
5. They should have regular peer discussions supported by medical professional colleagues or other organizations providing professional development
6. After 85 years Council will no longer issue a practising certificate

*Recommended October 2014
Sources, Quebec Medical
Council and Medical Council of
New Zealand
Approved December 2022*



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