



In the EU/EC since	2004
Population	10.1 million
GDP per capita (2001)	€5,031
Currency	Forint (HUF)
	265 HUF = €1
(Active) dentist to population ratio	2,017
Main language	Hungarian

A National Health Insurance (NHI) Fund was introduced in 1993 with the goal of being self-supporting, based on compulsory payroll contributions from both employers and employees (and a very limited investment portfolio). Dental services are provided through the NHI, or by private dentists. In 2002 there were 5,611 dentists registered of whom 57% were female, and 4,992 of these were actively practising (56% female). There is a well developed system of specialists and dental hygienists are also widely used. Continuing education for dentists is mandatory, and is administered by the Dental section of the Hungarian Medical Chamber, to which all dentists must belong. Hungary has an extensive dental undergraduate training programme for overseas students.

Government and healthcare in Hungary

Hungary is a landlocked, strategically located country astride the main land routes between Western Europe and the Balkan Peninsula, as well as between the Ukraine and the Mediterranean basin. The country is adjacent to 7 other countries. The north-south flowing Duna (Danube) and Tisza Rivers divide the country into three large regions.

The population in 2002 was 10,075,034.

The Republic of Hungary is an independent, democratic constitutional state with an elected parliament. The current constitution dates from 1972. The country is administered as 19 counties + Budapest (capital). The President of the Republic, elected by the National Assembly every 5 years, has a largely ceremonial role but powers also include appointing the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister selects cabinet ministers and has the exclusive right to dismiss them. The unicameral National Assembly is the highest organ of state authority and initiates and approves legislation sponsored by the Prime Minister.

A Constitutional Court has power to challenge legislation on grounds of unconstitutionality.

The Local Government Act of 1990 shifted the responsibility for the ownership and management of health and social services to local and municipal governments.

A Health Insurance Fund was introduced in 1993 with the goal of being self-supporting, based on compulsory payroll contributions from both employers and employees (and a very limited investment portfolio). The contributions are funded from the employer who pays 11% and the employee 3%. The self-employed contribute the full 14% and unemployed people do not contribute.

There is a global amount decided each year by Parliament for public health expenditure.

The proportion of GDP spent on general healthcare, including dentistry in 2002, was 6.8%. Of this expenditure, 75% was "public" (OECD Feb 2004).

The major investments like construction and maintenance of premises, or equipment purchasing are financed by the owner, or co-financed from the Ministry of Health. All expenditures for day to day operations, including salaries of health care professionals, are financed by the National Health Insurance Fund. However, rates can be too low to cover the real costs of providing the services. The lack of adequate funding has led to the continuation of informal payments and use of public facilities for private practice businesses, to enable health care staff to supplement their incomes.

Oral healthcare

Public compulsory health insurance

Dental services are delivered either through dentists contracted with the National Health Insurance System, or by private practitioners.

The basic principles of establishing dental care facilities, subsidised by the National Health Insurance, are defined with respect to the number of inhabitants of a given geographic area. The facilities are assessed partly on the basis of a stipulated monthly allowance and partly on the basis of the output. The assessment is carried out on the basis of a care delivery score system, which is defined by the Ministry of Health, having considered the suggestions of the National Board of Dentistry. This board has 23 members, all dentists. The president is appointed by the Minister of Health. They hold a meeting 4 times a year. Representatives of other bodies (like the National Public Health and Medical Officers Service, Ministry) can be invited to the sittings.

There are about 8 million registered (NHI) patient visits in a year for 10 million NHI registered people in Hungary. As some people visit the dentist more than once a year and others do not visit at all it is estimated that 50% of the population will visit a dentist in any one year. There are no data from the private sector.

Oral examinations would normally be carried out annually for regular adult patients, twice a year for children. However, there are also special cases, where a more frequent care is needed. Domiciliary care is rare.

Emergency care, examination and diagnosis, conservative dentistry, including fillings and endodontics, and extractions, are free in each of the three defined age groups (0-18, 19-60, above 60). Crowns and bridges, implants, fixed orthodontic appliances and other complex or cosmetic treatments have to be paid for by the patients. Among those aged 18 to 60 years, in active employment, the patient pays 100% of the dental and technical costs. Only active workers have to pay, and the amount is not set – it is dependent upon the type of treatment. The [Medical Chamber](#) has a minimum-price recommendation for each item, but it is not compulsory for dentists to keep to this.

Those who belong to the age group 0-18, and those who are over 60, do not have to pay for the dental treatment, but there is a co-payment for the technical costs – for example: for orthodontic devices between 0-18 years 15% of the technical costs will be paid by the patient and 85% by the NHI. For those aged above 60 for partial dentures 50% of the technical costs will be paid by the patient and 50% by the NHI.

There is prior approval for treatment in special cases: for example, in patients who have allergies. The National Health Insurance Company will decide about the level of patient contribution for the treatment.

The allocation of funding to dentists is managed by the National Health Insurance Company and also local

government. The quantity of work done by a dentist is monitored by routine reports to the National Health Insurance Company about treatments done in the practice, every month.

A dentist would typically have up to 4,000 regular patients on his "list". For basic general dental treatment there are no difficulties in accessing public health care, but there are geographic areas where specialist treatment (for example orthodontics) is difficult to obtain.

In the NHI, dental procedures are allocated a certain number of points. The monetary value of each point is determined every three months in the following way. The total number of points earned in the period is divided into the amount of money in the budget. Thus the value of a point varies monthly.

Re-examinations normally are carried out for most adult patients annually

Spending on oral health services in 2000 was 3%.

Private Care

There are only 140,000 people, who have a private health insurance in Hungary (2002), at one of the 42 private insurance companies (just 9 private insurance companies have more than 5,000 members) – so they have little significance in the dental health care system.

About 30% of dentists work wholly privately, outside the State system (2002). Patients pay their dentist directly, under an item of treatment system. There is no regulation of private fees. The quantity of work done may come under the scrutiny of the Internal Revenue Service.

Of the 70% who work in the State system, some will also work privately, part-time. For dentists who are contracted to work with the NHI the only private items that can be provided are those which are not covered by the insurance scheme. For those dentists who are in private practice, their patients pay for all of their care.

The Quality of Care

There is a compulsory internal quality insurance system for those dental care providers who are contracted with the National Health Insurance Company.

Patients' complaints about State or Private care can be sent to the dental care providers, to the National Public Health & Medical Officers Service, or to the court. (Ethical complaints are judged by the Ethics Committee of the Medical Chamber – [see below](#)). There are authorised regional legal representatives for patients, who help with obtaining remedy for them.

Whilst in theory a penalty may result in a dentist being suspended, in reality this has not happened in Hungary by 2002.

Education, Training and Registration

Undergraduate Training

To enter dental school students must obtain the General Certificate of Education and then successfully pass an entrance examination. No other vocational entry is possible.

Dental schools are known as Fogorvostudományi Kar Dental Faculty (Semmelweis University, Budapest and the University of Debrecen), Fogorvostudományi Szak Dental "section" (University of Pécs and Szeged, where there is no extra faculty for dentistry, but it is part of the Medical Faculty). For dental schools, see [below](#).

There are 4 dental schools, all state funded, although some of the students have to pay their own fees. Student intake is about 185 (including about 36 overseas students) and 66% of the approximate total of 910 undergraduate students are female. The Hungarian undergraduate dental training is 5 years, with minimum of 5,000 contact hours. Approximately 160 students graduate each year.

There are courses offered to foreign students in Budapest [Semmelweis University](#) and the University of [Debrecen](#). At Semmelweis, in 2003, there were 76 undergraduates from non-EU countries, from Greece, Cyprus, Israel and some countries in the Middle East, being taught mainly in English. There is also one course in German, with 34 undergraduates (an annual intake of less than 8 students). At Debrecen, there were 64 undergraduates from outside Hungary, all but 4 being from outside the EU. The course for them is in English. For individual school undergraduate numbers, see Dental Schools.

Quality Assurance is monitored and checked by the National Accreditation Committee. The course has been revised in the light of advice, and alterations were made in 1996. Since then the course has been compliant with the EU Directives on the training of dentists.

Primary dental qualification

The title upon qualification is: Fogorvos Dentist (DDS)

Qualification and Vocational Training

Vocational Training (VT)

Until 2004, upon qualification, there was a programme of mandatory vocational postgraduate residency training for 26 months, under the guidance of a skilled dentist and based on a government decree. The programme is organised by the Universities/Dental Schools and is totally financed by the Ministry of Health, which pays the salaries. Residents, known as Központi gyakornok, must hold Hungarian citizenship. The residents are mainly employed in the public sector. The program consists of a theoretical part which covers all fields of dentistry including practice management, legal requirements and first aid and a practical part which is undertaken either at the University clinics or in other polyclinics accredited by the University. The residents work

under the supervision of a tutor and the whole program is supervised and coordinated by mentors appointed by the Dental Schools.

Residents must complete the courses, meet the practical and theoretical requirements, and pass their midterm exams in each dental subject successfully, in order to take the licence exam at the end of the 26 month training program. At completion of the program they will be qualified to open a private general dental practice or be employed by municipal or private practices.

This vocational training was compulsory for all graduates, including those of other EU countries' dental schools. However, changes to the law abolished the mandatory general dentistry residency programme, giving full access to liberal private practice, from 2004.

All dental graduates have all the rights for free practice after graduation.

Registration

Dentists must register with the Ministry of Health and the [Hungarian Medical Chamber](#).

For the recognition of non-EU diplomas it is necessary to pass an exam. Additionally, a Hungaro-logic test (which tests knowledge of the insurance and legal systems) must be passed by all, to work in Hungary. The test is conducted in Hungarian.

Further Postgraduate and Specialist Training

Continuing education

Participation in continuing education has been mandatory since 1999. The system is delivered mainly by the Dental Section of the Hungarian Medical Chamber, which is responsible for the supervision.

There is a scoring system, with accredited continuing education courses. A dentist must achieve 250 points in 5 years. This represents 250 hours, and some reading is allowed to be counted. The ultimate sanction for non-compliance is suspension from practice and the first audit of compliance will take place in 2004.

Specialist Training

For further training, 2 years must have elapsed after qualification, and vocational training must have been completed. Specialist Training takes place in universities and is 3 years for all specialties. A special committee (EFSzSztB) is responsible for this training.

There are four recognised specialties for training in Hungary:

- Orthodontics, with the title: Fogszabályozó szakorvos
- Periodontology, with the title: Parodontológus
- Paediatric dentistry, with the title: Gyermekfogorvos
- Dento-alveolar surgery, with the title: Dento alveoláris szájszsebész

Until 2002, Oral Surgery was the only specialisation in oral surgery open for both medical and dental doctors. Those working in hospitals and head and neck surgery departments needed double qualification, both MD and DMD degree. Those working in polyclinics could be licensed only with DMD academic degree. It is no longer a dental speciality.

Oral and maxillofacial surgery, since 2002, has been available for medical doctors, only. However, also from 2002, the new speciality, Dento-alveolar surgery was introduced and accredited by the government, and is only for dental graduates. This has a three year residency programme. Its competency level covers only the dento-alveolar region up to minor sinus operations.

A new speciality on Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics was introduced from 2004. It replaces the old "stomatologist" degree. The new speciality basically covers family dentistry or general dental practitioners, and also requires a 3-year training.

Workforce

Dentists

In 2002 there were 5,611 registered dentists in Hungary, of whom 57% were female. It was estimated that 4,992 were actively working (56% female). 452 dentists were from outside Hungary.

Total (2002)	5,611
In active practice	4,992
General practice	4,600
Public dental service	40
Hospitals	40
University	200
Armed Forces	80

The population per active dentist was 2,017.

The Hungarian Dental Association reports that the workforce is decreasing as the government is training fewer Hungarian dentists than those retiring or otherwise leaving full-time work as a dentist. Figures show that there a large number of dentists (both male and female) over the age of 50 – about 2000 - who will be retiring in the 10 years to 2013, which is more than the 120 or so Hungarian nationals per year being trained in the four Hungarian dental schools.

There were no reports of unemployed dentists, in 2003.

Specialists

Numbers of specialists (2002)	
Orthodontists	219
Dento-alveolar surgeons	10
Periodontists	25
Paediatric dentists	296
Oral (and maxillo-facial) surgeons	212

Specialists work in both the public and private sector. Patients may access specialists directly, or by referral.

The National Health Insurance Fund will make contracts only with specialists.

Auxiliaries

There are two kinds of clinical auxiliaries in Hungary – Dental Hygienists and Dental Technicians. Additionally, there are dental nurses.

Numbers of auxiliaries	
Hygienists (in 2003)	526
Technicians (estimated in 2000)	2,200
Assistants (in 2003)	4,100

Dental Hygienists

Hygienists are permitted to work in Hungary, provided they have a Certificate. They train in one of 7 State financed schools specifically for dental hygienists, for 1 year, following 2 year's training as a dental assistant.

They work under the supervision of a dentist, only, and their duties include scaling, cleaning and polishing, the insertion of preventive sealants and Oral Health Education. Their work is governed by the Ministry of Health. They are usually paid a set fee for every patient they treat. In 2003 they do not have to be registered, but registration is planned for the future.

In 2000 fewer than 50 were thought to work full-time.

Dental Technicians

Technicians train in one of 4 State financed training schools and the training period is 3 years. Theoretical training is undertaken at the school and practical training in special, contracted laboratories. They receive a certificate on the satisfactory completion of their training. Laboratories are registered. Only technicians who have passed a "masters" examination are registered.

They normally work in commercial laboratories. They construct prostheses for insertion by dentists and they invoice the dentist for the work that is done.

It is presumed that there are illegal denturists in Hungary because of the complaints that are received from patients.

Dental Assistants (Nurses)

Dental nurses assist the dentist at the chairside. They are trained for two years, in one of 22 specialised secondary schools, after leaving secondary school with the general certificate of education. They have to be registered with the Ministry of Health.

Practice in Hungary

Working in General (Private) Practice

A dentist can buy or rent a practice, join an existing practice, but can also establish a completely new practice. A general practice may be located in a shop, a house etc. However, when a dentist buys a practice it is just the equipment and facilities which are bought, and there is no amount for "goodwill" – ie, the patient list. Anyone may own a dental practice (see [Corporate dentistry](#)).

The state offers no assistance for establishing a new practice. When starting a new practice private dentists have to get the permission from the local health authorities – the National Public Health and Medical Officers Service. There are only restrictions on setting up practices which provide dental care in the national health insurance system (contract with the National Health Insurance Company). The restricting factor is the population (4,000 people have to be on the "list" of a practice).

There are no limits for the size of a practice in terms of associate dentists or other staff. There are minimum requirements for establishing a new practice - for example, the size of the treatment room for one piece of equipment (a dental unit) has to be a minimum of 16 sq metres. This is prescribed and strictly checked by the National Public Health and Medical Officers Service.

There are no restrictions for setting up private dental practice

Dentists in general practice would normally have incomes in the range of €500 to €1,500 per month (2001)

Working in Public Clinics

In some towns there are dental clinics owned by the local government. Dentists may work in these clinics and participate in the NHI system on the same terms as liberal dentists, although they are salaried employees of the clinic. So, patients may receive fillings, surgery and endodontics within the NHI, but will have to make co-payments for prosthetic appliances.

Quality Assurance would be given by the heads of the clinics.

In 2000 there were 40 salaried public dentists. They earn in the range of €500 to €700 per month.

Working in Hospitals

In 2000 there were 40 salaried dentists working full-time (about 42 hours a week) in hospitals or university clinics, as specialists in oral surgery. All the hospitals are State-owned. A part-time hospital dentist may work concurrently in private practice.

A hospital dentist would earn about €700 to €900 a month (2002)

Working in the University Dental Faculty

There are 4 dental schools, in which about 200 dentists work. They are allowed the combination of part-time teaching employment and private practice (with the permission of the university).

They normally are full-time employees of the University, and their salary range is €700 to €3,000 (for the Heads of Departments) per month.

The titles of university teachers are: Assistant Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor - this involves a further degree (publication activities and a record of original research) leading to a PhD and habilitation (second round of PhD).

Working in the Armed Forces

In 2003, about 80 dentists served full-time in the Armed Forces - 50% of these were females. These would be normally officers undertaking national service.

Professional Matters

Professional associations

The Hungarian Medical (Association) Chamber is the national professional association, in which all dentists must be members. All the physicians and dental practitioners who intend to practise medicine or dentistry in Hungary have to belong to the chamber, as these are the chambers that award the right to practise medicine or dentistry.

The Hungarian Medical Association (www.mok.hu) is an independent, professional, democratic, public body of all physicians and dentists working in Hungary. Its aims, objectives and activities are determined by statute (Hungarian Law XXVIII/1994 on Chambers).

A Supreme Medical Council represents the medical and dental professions at the state level, and regional councils at regional levels. The Board consists of 9 elected members.

The Hungarian Medical Association (Chamber) has a Dental Section – [see below](#)

The tasks of the Hungarian Medical Association (and its Dental Section) are:

- exercising care over conscientious practice, protecting the prestige of physicians and dentists
- preparing, performing, controlling and updating of decisions concerning the quality and conditions of medical practice, expressing its opinion on matters concerning public health and health policy of the state with its national and provincial local bodies, in cooperation with other associations and institutions in Hungary and in foreign countries: Communication of the standpoints of the medical profession on matters of health policy and medicine
- setting the principles of professional ethics. Ethical Code: regulate ethical and professional obligations of doctors among themselves and vis-à-vis patients
- defending individual and collective interests of members, offering mutual aid and other form of assistance to members
- expressing its opinion on matters concerning postgraduate education of physicians and dentists, taking part in its realisation
- promotion of quality assurance

The Hungarian Medical Association performs the tasks by means of

- keeping the register of physicians and dentists
- cooperation in working out the general conditions of contractions between physicians and the National Health Insurance Fund
- delivery of opinions on draft legislation concerning the protection of health and practising as a physician
- making decisions with respect of inability to practise as a physician or a dentist
- professional and ethical supervision of members
- negotiating conditions of work and remuneration
- defending individual and collective interests of the members

Ethics

Ethical Code

There is an ethical code in Hungary. There are both local and national ethical committees that enforce the code. It is a joint system with the medical profession but the ethical committee always has a dental member. The most serious penalty is that a dentist may lose their licence to practise, but this is very rare. A member may also be admonished. It is possible to appeal to an upper level and finally to the courts.

Advertising

Advertising is permitted under the framework of the ethical code, but this is very limited. It is restricted to information on

There is equal status for both physicians and dental practitioners and the Chamber is divided into regional chambers (19 provinces and Budapest), with a Hungarian Medical Assembly as the "parliament of the medical profession" in Hungary, where democratically elected representatives meet as delegates. The term of office for officers is 4 years.

Dental practitioners are represented at all organisational levels of the Medical Chamber. The representation of dental practitioners is secured in the Supreme Medical Council, and one of the two Vice-Presidents has to be a dentist.

name, title, telephone number/address, specialisation and consultation hours. It does not include the use of advertisements on the TV or radio. Hungarian dentists may use websites, within the ethical considerations – although the code does not include a specific section on the issue.

Data Protection

The rules for data protection in Hungary follow the EU Directives. There is a Data Protection Ombudsman.

Corporate Dentistry

Dentists are allowed to form corporate bodies (companies). Anyone may own or invest in a dental surgery. The person undertaking the dentistry must be a dentist but there is no requirement for the investors to be a dentist.

Indemnity Insurance

This is compulsory for all dentists in Hungary. There are many insurance companies offering this service. Costs are approximately €150 to €250 per year.

Health and Safety at Work

Dentists, and those who work for them, must be inoculated against Hepatitis B. The employer usually pays for inoculation of the dental staff.

Regulations for Health and Safety

For	Administered by
Ionising radiation	National Public and Medical Officer's Service
Electrical installations	Compulsory annual checks by MEEI
Waste disposal	National Public and Medical Officer's Service There is compulsory contracting with special companies who transport and dispose of waste
Medical devices	Institute for Medical and Hospital Engineering (ORKI) (A professional, non-profit organisation structured in the form of an institute, performing tests and conformity assessment of medical and hospital equipment. In the frame of international co-operation ORKI maintains contact with foreign medico-technical institutes and with other organisations involved in this field).
Infection control	National Public and Medical Officer's Service

Financial Matters

Dentists' Incomes:

The income ranges dentists would have expected to earn annually in 2002 (in Euros):

	Dentist 25 years old or 2 years after qualification	Dentist 45 years old or 20 years after qualification
Liberal General Practice	€6,000	€18,000
Public Health	€6,000	€8,400
Hospital	€8,400	€10,800
University	€8,400	€36,000

A further compulsory private scheme commenced in 1998, in which contributions are made at the rate of 20% by the dentist and 80% by the government.

Taxes

There was a tax rate of 40% above an income of about €5,000, in 2002.

VAT

From 2004 there are three VAT rates: 5% (for medicaments), 15% (materials) and 25% for equipment, instruments and disposables).

Retirement pensions and Healthcare

The normal age for retirement is 62, although dentists and staff can work past then.

There is a state-funded system of pensions, of which dentists and their staff are a normal part. The pension would be €200 per month.

Various Financial Comparators @ July 2003

Zurich = 100	Budapest
Prices (excluding rent)	55.9
Prices (including rent)	57.3
Wage levels (net)	15.6
Domestic Purchasing Power	30.3

Source: UBS August 2003

Other Useful Information

Main National association and information centre	Main specialist association:
Dental Section of the Hungarian Medical Association (Chamber) Szondi u 100 H – 1085 Budapest Tel: + 36 1 354 0469 Fax: + 36 1 353 2188 E-mail: kamara@fogorvos.hu Website: http://www.kamara.fogorvos.hu/	(Magyar Fogorvosok Egyesülete, MFE) Tel: +36 1 318 5222 (Prof Gera István) Email: gera@szajseb.sote.hu
Publications:	
Name: Magyar Fogorvos Tel: +36 4366100 Fax: +36 14366124 E-mail: dental@geomedia.hu Website: www.magyar.fogorvos.hu	Name: Fogorvosi Szemle Tel: +36 13171094 Fax: E-mail: Website:

Dental Schools:

<p>Budapest</p> <p>Name of University: Semmelweis University Tel: +361 266 0453 Fax: +361 266 1967 E-mail: kovesi@szajseh.sote.hu Website: www.sote.hu Dentists graduating each year: 60 Number of students (Hungarian): 310 Number of students (not Hungarian): 110</p>	<p>Debrecen</p> <p>Name of University: University of Debrecen Tel: +36 52 417 571 Fax: +36 52 419 807 E-mail: Website: www.klte.hu Dentists graduating each year: 50 Number of students (Hungarian): 137 Number of students (not Hungarian): 64</p>
<p>Szeged</p> <p>Name of University: University of Szeged Tel: +36 62 545 283 Fax: +36 62 545 282 E-mail: Website: www.szote.u-szeged.hu Dentists graduating each year: 29 Number of students (Hungarian): 160</p>	<p>Pécs</p> <p>Name of University: University of Pécs Tel: +36 72 536 200 Fax: +3672 536 201 E-mail: dekani.hivatal@aok.pte.hu Web site: Dentists graduating each year: 24 Number of students (Hungarian): 132</p>