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The Pipeline Model: A Novel Transformative Pathway in the Dental Education Continuum for Saudi Arabia's Strategic Health Workforce Planning Policy: An Exploratory Review

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ABSTRACT The pipeline model, widely used in various sectors, offers a strategic framework for addressing the distribution challenges across sectors. This article proposes a modified pipeline model for dental education to tackle the imbalance between general dentists and specialists, particularly in rural areas of Saudi Arabia. With the recent halt on admissions to a handful of dental colleges and a focus on increasing Saudisation in the workforce, the researchers propose that established dental colleges should enhance postgraduate seat availability in high-demand specialties, while emerging colleges continue to train undergraduates. By aligning postgraduate opportunities with market needs, the model aims to ensure a balanced distribution of dental professionals across urban and rural settings. This approach not only addresses the immediate employment challenges for general dentists but also fosters the development of specialists, thereby enhancing overall dental healthcare across the Kingdom. The proposed model aligns with national educational strategies, promoting a sustainable and equitable dental workforce.