

## **SIMULATING THE IMPACT OF EXPANDED DELEGATION OF DENTAL PROCEDURES**

**J.B. Dilworth**

**W.J. Pelton**

**O.H. Embry**

**G.A. Overstreet**

**School of Business**

**The University of Alabama**

**Birmingham, Alabama**

This paper discusses a project underway at the University of Alabama in Birmingham Dental School. The study objective is to investigate the productivity of dental teams using therapists. Therapists, sometimes called technotherapists or expanded duty dental auxiliaries, are dental assistants who perform under the supervision of dentists some of the reversible procedures previously performed only by dentists. The study involved both an actual practice using varying numbers of therapists and a GPSS model which simulates practices with varying numbers of therapists. Some of the reasons are discussed for using the simulation model to confirm and expand the actual practice findings. The paper also presents the model and discusses some of its possible future applications. Productivity data from the actual practice are compared to data from simulations. Simulation data are presented which compares the services provided by a dental team using a therapist to the services provided under identical conditions when the therapist and her assistant are excluded from the team.