

[Noncommunicable Diseases](#) [1]

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Oral health and global health

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading disease burden worldwide. In recognition of the importance of NCDs, the [United Nations High-level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases](#) [2] made a ground-breaking political declaration on September 2011 stating in particular "that renal, oral and eye diseases pose a major health burden for many countries and that these diseases share common risk factors and can benefit from common responses to noncommunicable diseases".

The impact of oral diseases on NCDs is considerable, in terms of pain and suffering, impairment of function, reduced quality of life and cost of treatment. In addition, the high level of global inequalities in oral health is unacceptable. Common oral infection/inflammation such as periodontal diseases is associated with NCDs, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, certain forms of cancer and respiratory diseases. Additional research is needed to determine the strength of oral and general health link and the clinical implications, through collaboration with other health care professionals.

Common risk factors for NCDs including oral diseases and an unhealthy diet (e.g. excessive intake of sugars, tobacco usage and excessive alcohol consumption) are shared and significantly influenced by socio-economic determinants.

FDI considers that the global NCD movement can be enriched through implementing strategies for controlling and preventing oral diseases for optimal oral and general health.

The role of FDI in addressing NCDs and oral health

1. FDI should advocate for global health improvement initiatives that incorporate oral health strategies into the NCD agenda, in particular within the framework of United Nations agencies.
2. FDI should establish alliances with major stakeholders in the field of NCDs such as other healthcare organizations, NGOs and the private sector.
3. Based on the WHA 2007 resolution for promoting oral health and integrated disease prevention, FDI encourages the integration of oral health to NCDs programmes.
4. The Common Risk Factor Approach is a guiding principle for developing evidence-based, population-wide interventions that address social determinants of health to reduce disease burden.

The role of FDI National Dental Associations (NDAs) in addressing NCDs and oral health

1. NDAs should make governments, policy makers and community leaders aware of the great importance of major common risk factors that affect both oral health and other NCDs.
2. NDAs should build strong alliances with all national stakeholders taking actions against NCDs.
3. NDAs and oral healthcare professionals should advocate for the implementation of integrated and well-planned interventions for NCDs within the health sector, in collaboration with the educational and public/private sectors.
4. NDAs should be proactive in undertaking health promotion strategies preventing and controlling the determinants of NCDs for optimal oral and general health.

References

- Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases. Resolution A/66/L1, United Nations, New York, 2011.
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- World Health Organization. Oral health: action plan for promotion and integrated disease prevention. World Health Assembly Resolution WHA60/R17, 2007.

[Science Committee](#) [3] **Classification:** [General health](#) [4]

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