

Preventing Oral Diseases [1]

October, 1998 Barcelona Spain

September, 2016 Poznań Poland

Context

Oral diseases have a negative impact on general health and well-being, with the greatest burden falling on the young, disadvantaged, underprivileged and ageing populations. The principal diseases are dental caries, periodontal diseases and oral cancer. Simple and relatively inexpensive measures such as education on oral hygiene practices and diet, use of fluoride, self-compliance, early screening and appropriate interventions prevent, or at least reduce, the high burden of oral diseases. In addition, studies have shown the existence of a relationship with systemic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. Furthermore, oral diseases have a negative impact on quality of life, affecting physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

Since 2008, there has been an increase in knowledge on the subject and in particular on the understanding of the effect of risk/protecting factors in systemic diseases.

Scope

Barriers to achieving optimal oral health include: low socio-economic status, lack of oral health literacy and education, and lack of access to care. Furthermore, low prioritization of public oral health in relation to general health policy also results in a lower perceived need and, at times, inadequate resource allocation and management. Preventive and health-promoting approaches based on common protective factors such as brushing, flossing, fluoride rinse, healthy nutrition, reduction on sugar consumption, cessation of tobacco use and limiting the consumption of alcohol apply to maintain good oral and general health.

Definitions

Prevention, together with health promotion and treatment, are important ways in which to lower the risk of oral diseases and minimize their impact on general health.

Principles

This policy statement seeks to further oral health in all health policies at national and international level and emphasize the interaction with general health in achieving oral disease prevention.

Policy

FDI World Dental Federation supports the view that:

- General populations, healthcare providers, policy and decision makers, and other stakeholders should be educated towards the understanding that oral health is an integral part of general health.
- Members of health professions, governments, intergovernmental, nongovernmental organizations, and the media, among others, need to promote the understanding that most oral diseases can be prevented.
- Inter-professional collaboration between stakeholders needs to adopt relevant and practical oral health

- approaches that are integrated into the prevention of other chronic noncommunicable diseases.
- Undergraduate training should emphasize prevention rather focusing on curative models.
- National health policies and programmes should be aimed towards preventing oral diseases and promoting and maintaining oral health.

Keywords

- Prevention, oral health policy, oral diseases, professional interaction, Noncommunicable diseases, inter-professional collaboration.

Disclaimer

The information in this Policy Statement was based on the best scientific evidence available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and socio-economic constraints.

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