

# Statement to the Multi-stakeholder Panel 1 of the United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance 2024

**“Addressing the urgent global risk of AMR across the human, animal, plant and environmental sectors through equity, access, building awareness and innovation.”**

Antibiotics don't cure toothache. Most dental infections are readily managed with procedures, without needing antibiotics. Left untreated, however, dental infections can quickly become life-threatening. Across human healthcare, dentistry is responsible for around 10% of antibiotics globally, with more used by people without access to oral healthcare. **Universal access to oral health services** at the primary healthcare level is, therefore, an important element of global efforts to combat resistance by ensuring antibiotics are used only when strictly necessary.

Reducing dental disease will reduce the demand for antibiotics. Dental infections are non-communicable diseases, which are largely preventable by restricting sugar intake and excellent oral hygiene. FDI and its members are experts at advocating for preventing infections and dental antibiotic stewardship. This expertise, together with resources and networks, can be leveraged by those wishing to **integrate dentistry into global and national AMR policies and action plans**.

Studies have consistently shown around 80% unnecessary or inappropriate antibiotic prescribing by dentists, for both acute conditions and for the prophylaxis of distant-site infections during dental procedures. **Building AMR awareness across healthcare** and the public must include education about the risks of antibiotics and the importance of managing dental problems without antibiotics, wherever possible.

FDI World Dental Federation recommends, therefore, three innovations focused on avoiding antibiotic use:

- 1) Universal access to oral healthcare for preventing and treating acute dental problems;
- 2) Integrating dentistry into global and national AMR policies and plans; and
- 3) Building awareness across healthcare that antibiotics don't cure toothache.

**Delivered by Dr Wendy Thompson,**

**Chair of the FDI Preventing AMR & Infections Task Team**

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