Who We Are

About us

FDI World Dental Federation serves as the principal representative body for more than 1 million dentists worldwide, developing health policy and continuing education programmes, speaking as a unified voice for dentistry in international advocacy, and supporting member associations in global oral health promotion activities. Over the years, it has developed programmes, initiatives, campaigns, policies and congresses, always with a view to occupying a space that no other not-for-profit group can claim.

FDI works at national and international level through its own activities and those of its member dental associations. It is in official relations with the World Health Organization, and is a member of the World Health Professions Alliance.

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A Call for Global Action

The first edition of the *Oral Health Atlas* focused on ‘mapping a neglected global health issue’.

The new edition of this atlas continues to highlight the extent of the problem worldwide and reflects on policies and strategies addressing the global burden of oral disease.

*The Challenge of Oral Disease – A call for global action* is a valuable advocacy resource for public health experts, policy makers, the oral health profession and anyone with an interest in oral health.

Inequalities in Oral Health

- Oral conditions affected 3.9 billion people worldwide in 2010.
- Oral diseases are estimated to be the *fourth most expensive* diseases to treat.
- *Socioeconomic status* is a fundamental determinant of both oral health and general health.
- Only about *two-thirds of the world’s population* has access to adequate oral healthcare, with big differences between countries.
- *Policies with the greatest potential to deliver sustainable and improved health and oral health status* aim at:
  - reducing poverty
  - increasing social inclusion
  - improving the general levels of education
  - reducing barriers to healthcare
  - promoting affordable housing, safe water and sanitation
  - protecting minority and vulnerable groups.

Preventing Oral Diseases

- *Oral health and general health* are closely related and should be considered holistically.
- *Tooth decay* – the *most common chronic disease worldwide* – can be largely be prevented by reducing sugar consumption, increasing appropriate fluoride use and by maintaining good oral hygiene.
- *Periodontal disease* – a *common but preventable oral condition* – can be prevented by implementing population-wide strategies to maintain a healthy lifestyle, with low exposure to risk factors (tobacco or harmful alcohol use), along with good oral hygiene and regular check-ups.

- *Oral cancer* – among the 10 most common cancers worldwide – can be prevented by reducing the main risk factors (tobacco or harmful alcohol use), early detection through regular visits to the dentist, and integrating oral health promotion strategies in the context of NCD reduction.

A Blueprint to Address the Challenge of Oral Disease

- The challenge in addressing oral diseases requires the right balance between implementing population-wide preventive strategies, strengthening the oral health workforce, and adapting the skills and capacities of oral healthcare providers.
- The integration of oral health and general health should be the *cornerstone of policy approaches* to improve prevention and control of oral diseases.
- Oral diseases share common risk factors and can benefit from *common responses to noncommunicable diseases*.
- An *ideal primary oral healthcare system* should provide universal coverage, be people-centered, have demand-led policies and programmes, and be integrated with general health in all policies – including labor, environment and education.
- The *persisting gaps in data on the prevalence of oral diseases* call for better disease surveillance and monitoring for an effective public health response.
- *Policies to improve quality and reduce cost of fluoride toothpaste* include removing taxation and improving capacities of national food and drug administrations for better monitoring of toothpaste quality.